Saturday April 19 1997

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The Guardian

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NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR 46,842

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British artists high on its own vulgarity
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She's leaving home...
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Soccer
Robbie Fowler: 'I'm not violent, I'm brave'
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Political favours overdue

Major plans bumper honours list

David Hencke
Westminster Correspondent

JOHN MAJOR is planning to create 30 more peers in one of the biggest honours lists since Harold Wilson's infamous resignation "Lavender List" 21 years ago, if he is defeated on May 1.

The announcement of 21 new peers today — including Lord Baker, Lord Hurd and Lord Hattersley — will be followed by a resignation list expected to include many old friends. Contenders include Tristan Garel Jones, the former Foreign Office minister; a raft of people retiring from the Tory backbench 1922 Committee, including the former secret agent Sir Cranley Onslow, and lobbyists such as Sir Tim Bell and House of Cards author Michael Dobbs.

The list is expected to equal the notorious "Lavender List", when Wilson resigned and awarded honours to everyone from his chauffeur to his showbusiness friends. Among the more amazing honours in 1976 included a peerage for his secretary, Lady Falkender, a knighthood for James Goldsmith, and a peerage for Eric Miller, the discredited financier.

The surprise mid-election dissolution list has been prompted by a huge backlog of political favours owed by both the Prime Minister and Tony Blair to their respective friends and colleagues.

By convention, the Prime Minister is expected to give any former Cabinet minister retiring from Parliament a life peerage, while Tony Blair is keen to increase his younger contingent in the House of Lords to carry through his pledge to expel the hereditary peers. Labour is committed to setting up a committee of both Houses of Parliament to consider wide-ranging reforms of the House of Lords, including replacing it with an elected chamber and abolishing it.

> 'It was the thought of all those late night and all night sittings which I can remember under previous Labour governments that made me think at my age that I could do without this.'
>
> **John Evans, aged 66, Labour MP for St Helens North**

Sources said Mr Major will spread the honours over three lists, including the Queen's Birthday Honours List, to lessen public outcry over such a big exercise.

The Tories honoured include the Guinness family millionaire and ex-trade secretary, Paul Channon; the former transport secretary, David Howell; the ex-agriculture secretary Sir Michael Jopling; and the "semi-detached" former Leader of the Commons, John Biffen, who was sacked by Margaret Thatcher. None served in a Major government.

The retiring MPs Kenneth Baker, Sir Patrick Mayhew and Douglas Hurd were all ennobled but there was surprise that Mr Major has also honoured John Patten, who left office as education secretary under a cloud in 1994, and the former chief whips, Sir Tim Renton and Richard Ryder. Chief whips are not automatically entitled to ennoblement.

Labour's list included the former deputy leader Roy Hattersley; Joan Lestor, a Callaghan government education minister; the ex-deputy chief whip Don Dixon; John Evans; Doug Hoyle, former chairman of the Parliamentary Labour Party; Sir Geoffrey Lofthouse; and Peter Shore, the ex-Labour Cabinet minister and Eurosceptic.

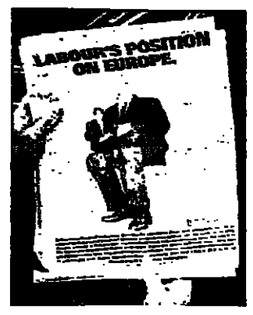
Particular interest was shown in peerages for three former MPs — Doug Hoyle, John Evans and Sir Geoffrey — who stood down at the last minute. They denied being asked to leave with the promise of a peerage to make way for Blairite candidates.

Mr Evans, aged 66, said yesterday: "It was the thought of all those late-night and all-night sittings which I can remember under previous Labour governments that made me think at my age that I could do without this. I also made sure that my own constituency party could choose its own candidate."

Three retiring Liberal Democrat MPs were ennobled: the former leader Sir David Steel, Sir Russell Johnston and David Alton. Sir James Molyneaux, ex-leader of the Ulster Unionists, was also made a Lord.

Profiles, page 5

The Conservative position on Europe?



The Tory advertisement, top right, and an alternative view of Major's position, above

PHOTOMONTAGE: ROGER TOOTH

THE Deputy Prime Minister, who is known chiefly for his love of politics and planting trees, yesterday revealed a hitherto additional unknown talent — graphic design.

It was Michael Heseltine's idea to utilise the technique of photomontage — invented by two German communist artists in 1916 — to portray Tony Blair as a little ventriloquist's dummy sitting on the vast knee of Helmut Kohl. Mr Heseltine is said to have drawn doodles of the image during a strategy meeting and dispatched them to the masters of the propoganda poster, M&C Saatchi, to realise.

He thus placed himself in a direct lineage of artists using photomontage for political ends which began with George Grosz and John Heartfield. Their targets were capital, militarism and fascism. Mr Heseltine wanted to alert the world to the danger of allowing Tony Blair to negotiate in Europe — "sending a boy to do a man's job".

The image is destined, like the Saatchis' recent Demon Eyes poster, to be endlessly parodied. The Guardian's Roger Tooth got there first.

Full report, page 4

Bombs and alerts cause chaos

David Ward, Ewen MacAskill and Martin Wainwright

THE IRA forced its way back into the election campaign yesterday with a series of explosions and bomb alerts, bringing chaos to roads, railways and towns throughout the Midlands and the North.

Bombs exploded in Leeds and Doncaster and army bomb disposal teams carried out two controlled blasts in a subway at Stoke-on-Trent station, in Staffordshire.

The east and west coast main rail routes remained blocked last night, although Crewe railway station had reopened, along with more than 50 miles of the M6 after five hours of searches.

The blasts, condemned by all the political parties, tested the patience of the British and Irish parties who would like to see Sinn Fein, the IRA's political wing, enter talks on a political settlement.

Tony Blair was careful, however, to leave the door open to Sinn Fein. Labour hopes a new government might give momentum to the peace process and offered Sinn Fein a place at talks before the summer if the IRA called a ceasefire.

Mr Blair said yesterday the path to peace was there for the IRA to take: "They either take it or they will be cast out of this process for ever."

John Major accused the IRA of playing "silly games" by confining its campaign to England because it did not want to lose Sinn Fein votes in Northern Ireland. Echoing a recent speech by the Irish prime minister, John Bruton, he said a vote for Sinn Fein was a vote for the IRA.

Great North Eastern Railways, which runs the east coast mainline, halted northbound trains at Retford and southbound services at York and bridged the 60-mile gap with buses. Virgin, the west coast operator, diverted some services but passengers were advised to postpone journeys until today.

Warnings of the incidents were given in three telephone calls. No one was injured but the alarms closed rail stations in Leeds, Doncaster, Crewe and Stoke. The towns were gridlocked as police sealed off centres, and offices, hotels, shops and some homes were evacuated.

The Leeds bomb, like one of two which exploded at Wilmslow in Cheshire before Easter, was concealed in a signalling relay box. It went off shortly before 9am as a commuter train from Ilkley was passing and as police were evacuating the station after a warning received at 7.14am.

In a pattern established at Wilmslow, warnings were not made directly to the emergency services.

West Yorkshire's chief constable, Keith Hellawell, said: "We received a message at the Leeds General Infirmary but that message was not coded. If this is a new tactic, and I don't know that it is, then it is a despicable action — we are sinking further into the depths of depravity."

Trains had been diverted through Leeds after the warning of a device in Doncaster where a small bomb exploded on a railway bridge just after 10am. Many trains were halted outside stations.

The Stafford caller warned at 7.20am of devices at Stoke and Doncaster stations and on the M6 at junctions 14 and 15 (north of Stafford) and at junctions 27 and 28 (south of Preston, Lancashire).

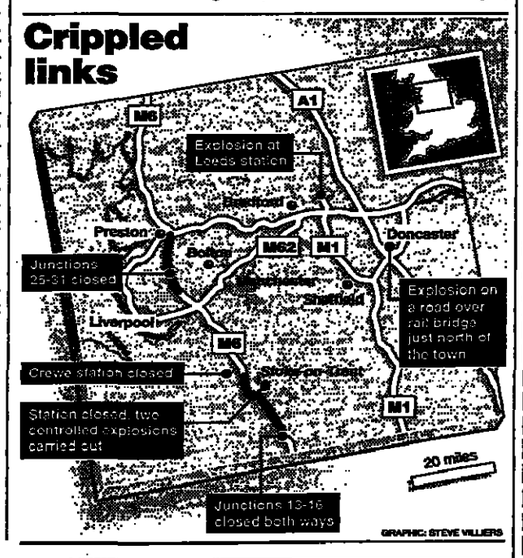
Staffordshire's assistant chief constable Steve Green refused to say who took the call or whether a code had been used.

Officers from the Staffordshire, Cheshire and Lancashire forces closed the M6 from junctions 13 to 16 and 25 to 29 and searched bridges, embankments and the hard shoulder but found nothing.

At Stoke station, bomb squad officers blew open a door and then a parcel which proved to be harmless. The Crewe warning was phoned to a local hospital where the operator had to be treated for shock. No bomb was found.

Earlier this month, the Grand National had to be postponed when a bomb threat forced the evacuation of the Aintree race course. On April 4, four mainline stations in London were closed after calls to British Transport Police and on April 3 calls led to two bombs being found under the motorway system around Birmingham.

Crippled links



GRAPHIC: STEVE VILLIERS

Two sofas, two chairs: £2m

Stuart Millar on the prized result of a rare collaboration between two 18th century masters

FOR most people, £2 million would easily be enough to secure their dream home, fully furnished, with plenty left over for a nice car. But this summer wealthy interior decoration enthusiasts will be offered the opportunity to fork out the equivalent of a decent-sized lottery win, just for something to sit on.

Designed by Robert Adam, and built by Thomas Chippendale, the world's most valuable four-piece suite yesterday went on display at Christie's in London. Consisting of two sumptuously upholstered, gilt-wing armchairs and a matching pair of sofas, it represents the only known collaboration between two of the 18th century's greatest masters.

When they are offered at auction in July, the chairs alone should fetch £800,000 to £1.2 million, while the sofas could be picked up for a bargain basement £700,000 to £1 million.

A detail of carving on one of the Chippendale armchairs

Even a mid-estimate bid would be enough to create a new world auction record, beating the £881,500 paid for a pair of George I gilt-gesso open armchairs sold by Christie's in 1994.

The suite, originally of eight armchairs and four sofas, is no stranger to setting records. Commissioned in the 1760s by Sir Lawrence Dundas, known for his wealth as the Nabob of the North, each of the armchairs cost £20, a staggering amount for the time, and the sofas cost £54 each.

They have remained in the family ever since, and were moved to the family seat at Aske Hall, Yorkshire, in the 1930s.

The celebrated architect, Adam, was known to have designed the suite, for which he charged £5. But it was not until the 1960s that an account was discovered proving that it was built by Chippendale.

The Dundas suite is one of the earliest examples of the renowned cabinetmaker working in the neo-classical style. The frames are enriched with classical motifs such as pairs of sphinxes, winged beasts and formal acanthus scrolls.

Robert Copley, director of Christie's furniture department, said yesterday: "The suite was the best there was in the 18th century — and is still the best today.

"Chippendale is regarded as the best chairmaker in the world and because these chairs are so well sculpted you sit in them and immediately feel comfortable."

An appeal from **Tony Blair**

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Manchester United have decided to go to arbitration in their bid to end this season's fixture congestion. The Week

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Killer to be sent back to Britain

Lawrence Donegan on the expulsion of a murderer from Australia

IMMIGRATION officials in Australia confirmed last night that a multiple murderer who was born in Glasgow but left almost 40 years ago is to be deported to Scotland when he is released from prison next month.

Archie McCafferty, aged 49, who was jailed for life in 1974 for three murders, and subsequently convicted of the manslaughter of a fellow prisoner, was granted parole yesterday after psychiatric reports confirmed he was stable enough to return to the community. He will be released from Parklea prison, Sydney, by May 3.

The New South Wales immigration service has been granted a deportation order against McCafferty, who arrived in Australia with his family in 1958 but never applied for citizenship. A spokesman said he technically remained a British citizen and would be taken to the airport and sent home as soon as he was freed.

"The man is a serial killer and he has threatened to kill again. Our primary concern is the Australian community. I don't think there is anything the people of Scotland can do to stop this going ahead," the spokesman said.

McCafferty, aged 49, is appealing against the order, but Glasgow city council said yesterday it had made arrangements to house him. He has kept in regular contact with a cousin who lives in the city's Sighthill district and it is thought the relative has offered him accommodation.

A council spokesman said it was legally obliged to give support for up to 12 months to anyone released from prison, but Labour MP Michael Martin has appealed to the Australian authorities not to "use the UK as a dumping ground".

McCafferty, who was given the nickname "mad dog" in his teenage years, was the leader of five-member gang which embarked on a series of random killings after his six-week-old son died while being breast-fed. He had a history of psychiatric problems. The jury at his 1974 trial heard he set out to kill seven people after believing he had been visited by his dead son, who instructed him to "kill seven, kill seven" and he would come back to life. He then went out and stabbed a 50-year-old tramp and abducted and shot two men on successive nights. He was arrested with his fellow gang members the next day, when they were said to be on their way to kill his wife, Janice, and mother-in-law.

Yesterday's parole hearing was told McCafferty remained obsessed with the number seven in prison, writing an autobiography entitled Seven Shall Die. He was initially aggressive and dangerous, but by 1988 was seen as a model prisoner. He had since shown no evidence of psychiatric disorder. After the hearing McCafferty apologised to relatives of his victims, saying he was "out of touch with reality" at the time of the killings. "There is a time for punishment and there is a time for change. To keep me in jail and keep hatred in your heart — that would destroy you. There is no value in that. I'm a changed man and I have become a better person," he said. He reiterated his desire to stay in Australia, where his 72-year-old mother still lives, and said he been offered three jobs in the Sydney area. He has lodged an appeal against the deportation order but an earlier appeal was dismissed and it is unlikely a new one will be successful.

The Sighthill district centres around a series of multi-storey flats north of Glasgow's centre, and is one of the city's more socially deprived areas. Reports that McCafferty could be coming to live there met with a mixed response from residents.

John Mack, a retired engineer with three children, said: "The man has served his time. What he did happened more than 20 years ago and, if we believe in the penal reform system, we have to say he has paid his dues. He is more than welcome to come here. He can stay next door to me if he likes."

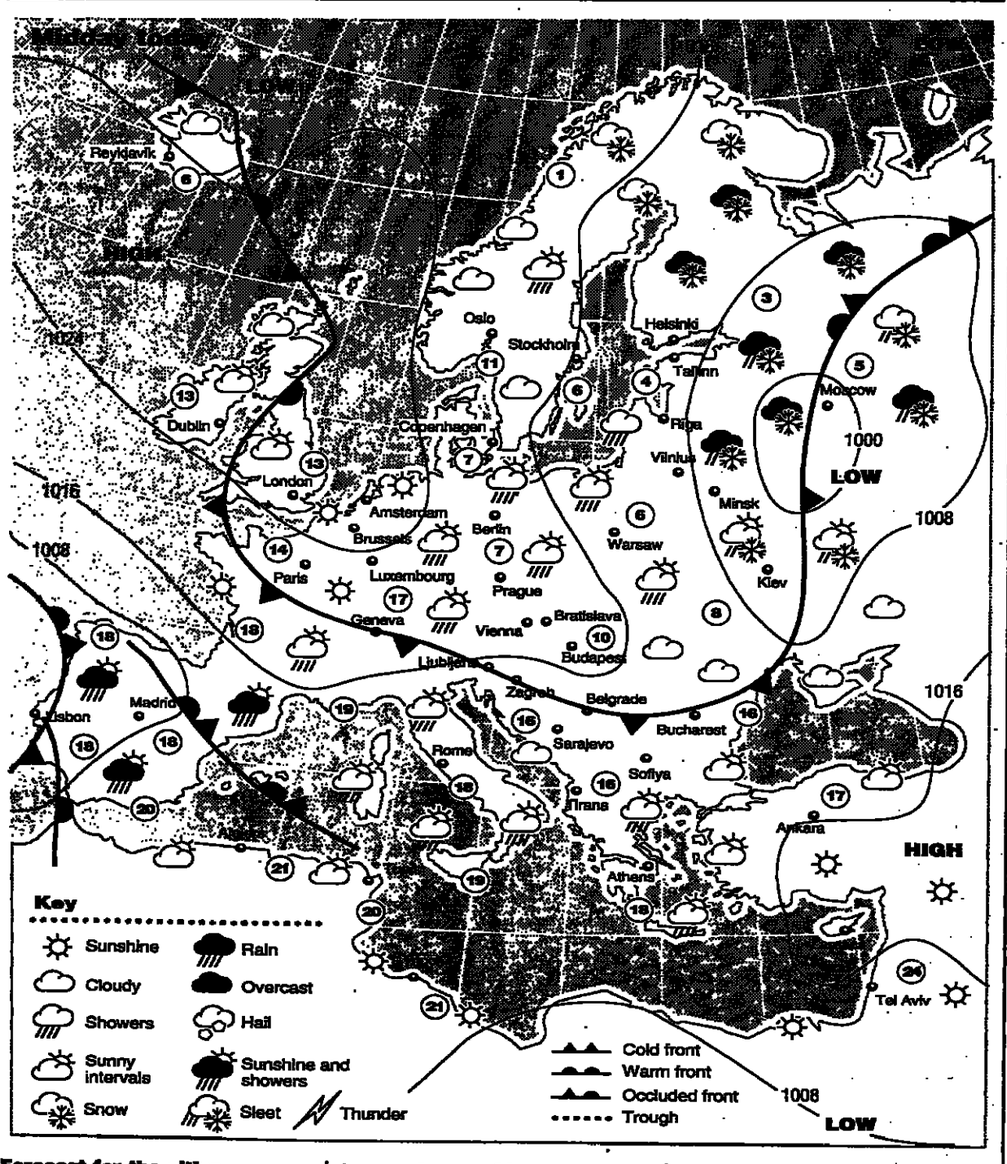
But Neil Ingram, 66, described the Australian authorities' actions as disgraceful. "We don't want this guy here. Believe you me, we've got more than enough nutters in Sighthill."

The Sighthill district of Glasgow, where it is expected Archie McCafferty will be living PHOTOGRAPH: MURDO MacLEOD

McCafferty in Sydney yesterday PHOTOGRAPH: MARK BAKER

'He has threatened to kill again. Our primary concern is the Australian community. I don't think there is anything the Scots can do'

The weather in Europe



Forecast for the cities

Today

	max	min	weather
Algiers	21	10	F
Amsterdam	11	3	F
Athens	18	13	Sh
Berlin	7	1	Sh
Bonn	15	3	F
Brussels	13	5	Sh
Copenhagen	7	1	F
Crete	17	16	F
Geneva	17	3	S
Larnaca	20	13	S
London	13	8	S
Madrid	18	14	Sh
Milan	16	7	Sh
Nice	16	12	Sh
Oslo	11	3	C
Paris	14	7	S
Rome	18	8	S
Stockholm	6	+1	C
Tunis	22	11	C
Vienna	12	4	Sh

Tomorrow

	max	min	weather
Algiers	21	15	C
Amsterdam	12	6	F
Athens	18	10	F
Berlin	6	2	C
Bonn	10	2	F
Brussels	12	7	F
Copenhagen	8	3	S
Crete	21	12	S
Geneva	14	9	F
Larnaca	22	10	C
London	13	7	S
Madrid	18	9	Sh
Milan	16	10	Sh
Nice	18	10	F
Oslo	10	2	C
Paris	13	6	C
Rome	19	9	C
Stockholm	6	0	Sh
Tunis	23	13	S
Vienna	15	7	C

Monday

	max	min	weather
Algiers	22	14	Sh
Amsterdam	12	6	S
Athens	18	13	S
Berlin	12	5	S
Bonn	15	2	S
Brussels	13	7	S
Copenhagen	9	4	F
Crete	22	14	S
Geneva	19	3	C
Larnaca	22	11	S
London	17	6	S
Madrid	18	8	Sh
Milan	18	13	C
Nice	18	13	Sh
Oslo	11	1	C
Paris	18	7	S
Rome	21	12	C
Stockholm	9	1	Sh
Tunis	22	12	F
Vienna	14	4	S

Tuesday

	max	min	weather
Algiers	20	12	C
Amsterdam	11	4	Sh
Athens	22	14	Sh
Berlin	11	2	Sh
Bonn	13	3	Sh
Brussels	11	6	Sh
Copenhagen	9	3	Sh
Crete	27	14	S
Geneva	11	4	Sh
Larnaca	27	16	S
London	13	4	C
Madrid	17	6	S
Milan	15	9	Sh
Nice	15	8	Sh
Oslo	12	2	Sh
Paris	14	5	C
Rome	18	9	Sh
Stockholm	10	3	Sh
Tunis	21	12	F
Vienna	12	3	C

C, cloudy; Cl, clear; D, drizzle; F, fair; Fg, fog; H, hail; Hz, haze; R, rain; Sh, showers; Sl, sleet; Sn, snow; S, sunny; Th, thunder. * (previous day's reading)

Around the world

Lunchtime yesterday (previous day in Americas)

		C	F
Ajaccio	C	19	66
Amsterdam	C	8	46
Anchorage	S	1	34
Anglesey	C	11	52
Athens	F	14	57
Atlanta	C	16	61
Auckland	C	18	64
B Aires	C	0	32
Bangkok	C	37	99
Barbados	C	30	86
Barcelona	R	12	54
Beijing	S	17	63
Beirut	S	18	64
Belfast	C	11	52
Belgrade	C	14	57
Berlin	C	9	48
Bermuda	C	18	64
Bogota	C	18	64
Bombay	C	30	86
Bordeaux	C	17	63
Boston	C	14	57
Brisbane	S	23	64
Brussels	F	10	50
Budapest	C	12	54
Cairo	S	24	75
Calcutta	C	34	93
Calgary	C	12	54
Canberra	F	15	59
Cardiff	C	9	48
Casablanca	F	21	70
Chicago	C	7	45
Christchurch	C	15	59
Copenhagen	C	8	46
Corfu	C	15	59
Dakar	F	23	73
Dallas	C	20	68
Denver	S	19	66
Dhaka	C	31	88
Djibouti	C	31	88
Faro	C	19	66
Florence	S	17	63
Frankfurt	C	15	59
Geneva	F	12	54
Gibraltar	C	20	68
Hamburg	C	10	50
Harare	C	24	75
Helsinki	F	3	37
Hong Kong	Fg	25	77
Honolulu	F	27	81
Innsbruck	F	12	54
Istanbul	C	8	46
Jerusalem	S	16	61
Jo'burg	C	21	70
Karachi	S	33	91
Kathmandu	F	25	77
Kiev	Sn	3	37
Kingston	F	30	86
Lanzarote	F	20	68
Lisbon	C	25	77
Lisbon	C	20	68
London	C	11	52
Los Angeles	C	18	64
Madrid	C	17	63
Majorca	C	15	59
Malaga	C	22	72
Melbourne	S	15	59
Milan	S	17	63
Montreal	C	6	43
Moscow	C	12	54
Nairobi	C	26	79
Naples	S	15	59
New Delhi	F	30	86
New Orleans	S	22	72
New York	R	12	54
Nice	F	16	61
Oporto	C	17	63
Paris	S	16	61
Perth	C	25	77
Prague	F	14	57
Rhodes	C	16	61
Rio de Jan.	C	25	82
Rome	F	15	59
Singapore	Th	32	90
Stockholm	Sn	5	41
Strasbourg	F	14	57
Sydney	F	19	66
Tel Aviv	F	20	68
Tenerife	C	20	68
Tokyo	C	21	70
Toronto	C	4	39
Tunis	R	17	63
Valencia	C	14	57
Venice	S	15	59
Vienna	C	13	55
Warsaw	C	9	48
Washington	R	11	52
Zurich	S	12	54

European weather outlook

Quite cloudy and cold, but it should stay dry and mostly sunny in Oslo and Stockholm. There may be some snow showers in the north, over high ground and in Finland, but Sweden and Norway will be mostly cloudy with a few sunny periods. Denmark should stay dry, but it will be rather cloudy. Max temps 2-11C.

Low Countries, Germany, Austria, Switzerland:

A mixture of sunshine and showers for most areas with the best of the sunshine in the west. It will feel quite cold in the northerly wind with highs of only 6C in eastern Germany, but a warmer 13-17C in parts of Austria and Switzerland.

France:

Another fine day with plenty of sunshine and blue sky. It will be quite cool despite the sunshine with highs ranging from 10C on the north coast to 19C on the south coast. Inland the maximum temperature will be 13-15C.

Spain and Portugal:

Further unsettled weather for Spain and Portugal. Although there will be some sun at times in most places, the best weather is likely to be in south-eastern Spain. Temperatures will be similar to yesterday with highs of 18-19C in Portugal and 15-21C in Spain.

Italy:

A mostly cloudy day with a few scattered showers but there will be some good sunny periods too. Max temperature ranging from 14C in the north to 19C in Sicily.

Greece:

Most of Greece will see the odd shower today, but there will also be some long sunny spells and plenty of blue sky. Highest temperatures will be in the south at 18-20C, but in the north the temperature will struggle to only 14-15C.

Television and radio — Saturday

BBC 1

6.00am Henry And The Hendersons. 6.25 News And Weather. 6.30 Children's BBC: Felix The Cat. 6.45 Phantom 2040. 6.10 The Real Adventures Of Jonny Quest. 8.35 The Flintstones. 10.00 Live And Kicking. 1.32 Weather. 1.35 Grandstand. 1.20 Football Focus. 6.20 News And Weather. 6.30 Regional News And Sport. 6.35 Cartoon. 6.45 Dad's Army. 7.15 The New Adventures Of Superman. 8.00 Whatever You Want. 8.50 The National Lottery Live. 9.30 Chris Tarrant's 9.59 National Lottery Update. 10.00 Bitter Blood. 11.30 News And Sport. 12.00 Match Of The Day. 1.05 They Think It's All Over. 1.35 World Snooker. 2.15 Top Of The Pops. 2.45 FILM: Pigeons. 4.15 Weather. 4.20 Close.

BBC 2

7.30am 15th-Century Venice And Antwerp. 7.45 Electrons And Atoms. 8.30 Shooting Video History. 9.00 Open Saturday. 11.30 Snooker: World Championship. 1.15 Film 97 With Barry Norman. 1.45 FILM: Stagecoach. 3.20 FILM: Death Of A Gunfighter. 4.50 The Saint. 5.40 Snooker: World Championship. 7.25 Travels With Pevsner. 8.05 Newsnight. 9.00 Weather. 9.05 Close-Up. 9.20 Call Of The Sea. 9.50 Till Death Us Do Part. 10.20 Have I Got News For You. 10.50 Sack Race. 11.40 Shoot Out In Swansea: The Making Of Twin Town. 12.45 FILM: Boyz N The Hood. 2.35 Later With Jools Holland. 3.45 Close.

BBC Prime

● Intelsat

7.00am World News. 7.25 World Weather. 7.30 Julia Jekyll and Harriet Hyde. 7.45 Badger and Badger. 8.00 Look Sharp! 8.15 Run the Risk. 8.35 Kevin and Co. 9.00 Blue Peter. 9.25 Grange Hill Omnibus. 10.00 Dr Who: The Monster of Peladon. 10.25 Style Challenge. 10.50 Ready Steady Cook. 11.30 World Weather. 11.35 EastEnders. 12.45 Style Challenge. 1.15 Ready, Steady, Cook. 1.45 Kilroy. 2.30 Children's Hospital. 3.00 Love Hurts. 3.30 World Weather. 3.35 Mop and Smiff. 4.10 Get Your Own Back. 4.35 World Weather. 4.45 Grange Hill Omnibus. 5.20 One Man and His Dog. 6.00 Top of the Pops. 6.30 Dr Who: Planet of the Spiders. 7.00 Dad's Army. 7.30 Are You Being Served? 8.00 Fle in the Sky. 8.00 Benny Hill. 8.50 World Weather. 10.00 Black Adder II. 10.30 Frankie Howerd Specials. 11.00 Men Behaving Badly. 11.30 The Fall Guy. 12.00 Bob Monkhouse: On the Spot. 12.30 Later with Jools Holland. 1.30 World Weather. 1.35 A Question of Identity.

BBC World

● Eutelsat

7.00am World News and Weather. 7.30 Reporters. 8.00 World News and Weather. 8.30 Hard Talk. 9.00 World News and Weather. 9.30 World Focus: Correspondent. 10.00 World News and Weather. 10.30 Time Out: Island Race. 11.00 World Headlines and Weather. 11.05 Weekend World: Great Journeys. 12.00 World News and Weather. 12.30 Time Out: Abroad in Britain. 1.00 World News and Weather. 1.30 This Week. 2.00 World Headlines and Weather. 2.05 Weekend World: Horizon. 3.00 World News and Weather. 3.30 Reporters. 4.00 World News and Weather. 4.30 Time Out: Island Race. 5.00 World Headlines and Weather. 5.05 Weekend World: Pandora's Box. 6.00 World News and Weather. 6.30 Time Out: Rhodes Around Britain. 7.00 World News and Weather. 7.30 This Week. 8.00 World News and Weather. 8.30 Hard Talk. 9.00 World Headlines and Weather. 9.05 Weekend World: Horizon. 10.00 World News and Weather. 10.30 Time Out: Island Race. 11.00 World News and Weather. 11.30 Reporters. 12.00 Newsdesk. 12.30 This Week. 1.00 World Headlines and Weather. 1.05 Weekend World: Pandora's Box. 2.00 World News and Weather. 2.30 Hard Talk. 3.00 World News and Weather. 3.30 World Focus: Correspondent. 4.00 World News and Weather. 4.30 India Business Report. 5.00 World Headlines and Weather. 5.05 Weekend World: Great Journeys. 6.00 World News and Weather. 6.30 World Focus: Britain In View.

Radio 4

92.4-94.6 MHz; 198 kHz (1514)

7.00am News Briefing. 7.30 Farming Today. 7.50 Prayer for the Day. 7.55 Weather. 8.00 Today. 8.55 Weather. 10.00 News. 10.05 Sport On 4. 10.30 Beatlemania. 11.00 Loose Ends. 12.00 Election Agenda. 12.30 From Our Own Correspondent. 1.00 Money Box. 1.25 The News Quiz. 1.55 Weather. 2.00 News. 2.10 Any Questions? 2.55 Shipping Forecast. 3.00 Any Answers? 3.30 Saturday Playhouse: Gigi. 4.45 How to Survive in Further Education. 5.00 Witnesses. 5.30 Science Now. 6.00 PM. 6.40 You Probably Think This Song Is About You. 6.50 Shipping Forecast. 6.55 Weather. 7.00 Six O'Clock News. 7.20 Week Ending. 7.50 Utopia and Other Destinations. 8.30 Kaleidoscope Feature. 8.50 On These Days. 9.00 Saturday Night Theatre: The Case-Book of Sherlock Holmes. 10.35 Classics with Kay. 10.50 Ten to Ten. 10.59 Weather. 11.00 News. 11.15 The Donahue Sisters. 12.15 Memoirs of a Misdemeaned Teacher. 12.30 Stanza on Stage. 1.00 News. 1.30 The Late Story: Flight. 1.45 Shipping Forecast. 2.00 As World Service.

BBC World Service

BBC World Service can be received in England on MW 648 kHz (463m) and in Western Europe on LW 198 kHz (1515m)

7.00am Newsday. 7.30 Science In Action. 8.00 Newsday. 8.30 The World Today. 9.30 Meridian Feature. 9.00 News. 9.15 From The Weeklies. 9.30 Counterpoint. 10.00 News. 10.10 Pause For Thought. 10.15 On Your Behalf. 10.30 Andy Kershaw's World of Music. 11.00 News. 11.05 World Business Report. 11.15 The Works. 11.45 Sports Roundup. 12.00 Newsdesk. 12.30 Reports From The Silk Road. 1.00 Newsdesk. 1.30 People And Politics. 2.00 News in German. 2.45 Short Story. 3.00 Newshour. 4.00 News. 4.05 Sportsworld. 5.00 News. 5.05 Sportsworld. 5.30 News in German. 6.00 News. 6.15 Sportsworld. 7.00 News. 7.30 F.O.O.C. 7.45 Sports Roundup. 8.00 Newsdesk. 8.30 Science In Action. 9.00 News. 9.01 Songs, Sonnets and Sounds of Laughter. 9.30 My Generation. 10.00 Newshour. 11.00 News. 11.05 World Business Review. 11.15 Britain Today. 11.30 Meridian Live. 12.00 Newsdesk. 12.30 Play of the Week: The Glass Menagerie. 1.30 Andy Kershaw's World Of Music. 2.00 Newsdesk. 2.30 Letter From America. 2.45 Britain Today. 3.00 Newsdesk. 3.30 On Your Behalf. 3.45 Sports Roundup. 4.00 Newsday. 4.30 Music Review. 5.00 News. 5.05 Sports Roundup. 5.30 F.O.O.C. 6.00 Newsdesk. 6.30 Global Business.

The Movie Channel

● Astra

7.00 Joe at the Kingdom of the Bees. 8.05 Joe at the Kingdom of the Ants. 9.55 Lancer Spy. 11.00 Batman Forever. 1.00 They Watch. 3.00 The Long Voyage Home. 5.00 With Honors. 7.00 Rolling Thunder. 8.00 Batman Forever. 11.00 Under Siege 2: Dark Territory. 12.45 Wes Craven's New Nightmare. 2.40 Under Siege 2: Dark Territory. 4.25 Confessions of a Sorority Girl. 5.45 With Honors.

Sky Movies

● Astra

7.00 Warlords of Atlantis. 9.00 The Return of Tommy Tricker. 11.00 Medicine River. 1.00 The Land That Time Forgot. 3.00 Little Women. 5.00 The Magic Kid 2. 6.30 Problem Child 3. 8.00 Little Women. 10.00 Wolf. 12.00 Indecent Behaviour II. 1.40 An Unmarried Woman. 3.50 Police Rescue. 5.20 Medicine River.

Sky Sports

● Astra

8.00 End Zone. 9.00 The Rugby Club. 9.30 Racing News. 10.00 Rugby League: Paris Vs Bradford. 12.00 Football: Liverpool Vs Manchester United - Live. 2.30 Sports Saturday. 3.00 Rugby Union: Leicester Vs Saracens - Live. 5.30 Sports Saturday Results. 6.30 Football Special. 8.00 Spanish Football - Live. 10.30 Rugby Union Update. 12.30 Australian Rules Football. 2.30 Spanish Football. 5.00 Close.

Eurosport

● Astra/Eutelsat

7.30 Motorcycling: Japanese Grand Prix - Live. 8.30 Basketball: Slam Magazine. 10.00 Tennis: Japan Open. 1.00 Motorcycling: Japanese Grand Prix. 2.00 Tennis: Trofeo Conde de Godo - Live. 6.00 Swimming: Short Course World Championships - Live. 9.00 Football: French Cup Semi-Finals. 10.00 Equestrianism - Live. 11.00 Motorcycling: Japanese Grand Prix. 12.00 Bodybuilding: 1995 NABBA European Championships. 1.00 Darts: European Grand Prix. 2.00 Close. 4.15 Motorcycling: Japanese Grand Prix - Live.

Sky One

● Astra

6.00 Orson and Olivia. 6.30 Dolly and Friends. 9.00 Press Your Luck. 9.30 Love Connection. 10.00 Quantum Leap. 11.00 Kung Fu: The Legend Continues. 12.00 The Legend of the Hidden City. 12.30 Sea Rescue. 1.00 World Wrestling Federation: Live Wire. 2.00 World Wrestling Federation: Shotgun Challenge. 3.00 Star Trek. 4.00 Star Trek: The Next Generation. 5.00 Star Trek: Deep Space Nine. 6.00 Star Trek: Voyager. 7.00 Kung Fu: The Legend Continues. 8.00 Hercules: The Legendary Journeys. 9.00 Coppers. 9.30 Cops I. 10.00 Cops II. 10.30 Serial Killers. 11.00 Law and Order. 12.00 LA Law. 1.00 The Movie Show. 1.30 L.A.P.D. 2.00 Dream On. 2.30 Smouldering Lust. 3.00 Hit Mix Long Play.

UK Gold

● Astra

6.00 The Sullivans. 10.00 Juliet Bravo. 11.00 Neighbours. 1.00 Pop Profile. 1.30 EastEnders. 3.55 Minder. 5.00 Man About the House. 6.05 The Pink Panther. 6.35 The A-Team. 7.35 Bullseye. 7.45 Just Good Friends. 8.25 Porridge. 9.05 The Magnificent Evans. 9.45 The Rockford Files. 11.45 The Sweeney. 12.35 The Equalizer. 1.25 Sports Annual of the Year. 1.45 Miami Vice. 2.30 Miami Vice. 3.20 Close.

NBC Superchannel

● Astra/Eutelsat

7.00 Travel Xpress. 7.30 The McLaughlin Group. 8.00 Hello Austria, Hello Vienna. 8.30 Europa Journal. 9.00 Users Groups. 9.30 Computer Chronicles. 10.00 Internet Cafe. 10.30 At Home. 11.00 Super Shop. 12.00 Tennis: Davis Cup. 1.00 PGA Golf. 2.00 NHL Power Week. 3.00 Federation Cup. 4.00 Europa a La Carte. 4.30 Travel Xpress. 5.00 The Best of The Ticket. 5.30 Scan. 6.00 MSNBC: The Site. 7.00 National Geographic Television. 8.00 Profiler. 10.00 The Tonight Show with Jay Leno. 11.00 Late Night with Conan O'Brien. 12.00 Talkin' Jazz. 12.30 The Ticket. 1.00 The Tonight Show with Jay Leno. 2.00 MSNBC: Intenlight Weekend. 3.00 Talking with David Frost. 4.00 Talkin' Jazz. 4.30 Executive Lifestyles. 5.00 Talking with David Frost. 6.00 Travel Xpress. 6.30 Inspiration. 6.30 Inspiration.

Discovery

● Astra/Intelsat

6.00 Saturday Stack Introduction. 6.01 Big Brother's Watching: Spies Above. 6.00 Wonders of Weather. 6.30 My Little Eye. 7.00 Eyes in the Sky. 8.00 History's Turning Points. 8.30 Hi-Tech Drug Wars: Ultra Science. 10.00 Extreme Machines. 11.00 Nightfighters. 12.00 Medical Detectives. 12.30 Medical Detectives. 1.00 Security Alert: Discover Magazine. 2.00 Divine Magic. 3.00 Close.

Television and radio — Sunday

BBC 1

6.25am Children's BBC: Dilly The Dinosaur. 6.35 Teletubbies. 6.05 The Pink Panther Show. 6.30 Breakfast With Frost. 10.30 Discovering Eve. 10.45 First Light. 11.15 See Hear! 11.45 Snowy River: The McGregor Saga. 12.30 Postcards From Down Under. 1.00 CountryFile. 1.35 Weather For The Week Ahead. 1.40 On The Record. 2.40 Tom And Jerry. 2.45 FILM: Zulu. 4.55 EastEnders. 6.20 True Tilda. 6.50 News And Weather. 7.15 Regional News. 7.40 Songs Of Praise. 7.15 Last Of The Summer Wine. 8.15 Antiques Roadshow. 9.10 Heroes Madness. 10.00 Bitter Blood. 11.30 News And Weather. 11.50 Everyman. 12.40 Passover Reflections. 12.55 FILM: Almost. 2.20 Weather. 2.25 Close.

BBC 2

7.05am Open University: England's Green And Pleasant Land. 7.35 Learning To Learn. 8.00 Tilings At The Alhambra. 8.35 The Business Cafe. 9.15 The Computer Show. 9.30 Children's BBC: Caleb Duke. 9.40 Stay Tooned. 10.15 The Adventures Of Skippy. 10.40 Pirates Of Dark Water. 11.05 Mighty Max. 11.30 Grange Hill. 12.00 Sweet Valley High. 12.25 Charlie Brown And Snoopy Show. 12.45 The O Zone. 1.15 The Simpsons. 2.00 Regional Programme. 2.30 Snooker: World Championship. 5.50 Rugby Special. 6.50 Land Of The Eagle. 7.45 Star Trek: Voyager. 8.35 Hogarth's Progress. 9.15 Vote Now, Pay Later. 10.00 Snooker: World Championship. 11.15 Bad Company. 2.05 Close. 3.00 Learning Zone.

BBC Prime

● Intelsat

7.00am World News. 7.30 World Weather. 7.35 Simon and the Witch. 7.45 Badger and Badger. 8.00 Mop and Smiff. 8.15 Get Your Own Back. 8.40 Uncle Jack and Cleopatra's Mummy. 9.05 Blue Peter. 9.35 Grange Hill Omnibus. 10.00 Top of the Pops. 10.30 Style Challenge. 10.55 Ready, Steady, Cook. 11.35 World Weather. 11.40 The House of Eliott. 12.30 Going, Going, Gone. 12.50 Style Challenge. 1.15 Ready, Steady, Cook. 1.45 Kilroy. 2.30 Children's Hospital. 3.00 The House of Eliott. 3.50 World Weather. 3.55 Jonny Briggs. 4.10 Run the Risk. 4.30 Blue Peter. 4.55 Grange Hill Omnibus. 5.30 Wildlife: A Day in the Life. 6.00 World News. 6.25 World Weather. 6.30 Antiques Roadshow. 7.00 Lovejoy. 8.00 999. 8.00 Robert Crumb. 10.00 The Plank. 10.30 Lifestory. 12.35 Songs of Praise. 1.00 World Weather. 1.05 After The Revolution.

BBC World

● Eutelsat

7.00am World News and Weather. 7.30 India Business Report. 8.00 World News and Weather. 8.30 Hard Talk. 9.00 World News and Weather. 9.30 World Focus: Window on Europe. 10.00 World News and Weather. 10.30 Time Out: Island Race. 11.00 World Headlines and Weather. 11.05 Weekend World: Pandora's Box. 12.00 World News and Weather. 12.30 Time Out: Rhodes Around Britain. 1.00 World News and Weather. 1.30 Reporters. 2.00 World Headlines and Weather. 2.05 Weekend World: Great Journeys. 3.00 World Headlines and Weather. 3.05 Breakfast with Frost. 4.00 World News and Weather. 4.30 Time Out: Island Race. 5.00 World Headlines and Weather. 5.05 Weekend World: Horizon. 6.00 World News and Weather. 6.30 Time Out: Abroad in Britain. 7.00 World News and Weather. 7.30 Reporters. 8.00 World News and Weather. 8.30 Hard Talk. 9.00 World Headlines and Weather. 9.05 Weekend World: Great Journeys. 10.00 World News and Weather. 10.30 Time Out: Island Race. 11.00 World Newsdesk. World Business News and 24 Hours. 12.00 Newsdesk. Asia Today and World Business Report. 1.00 World Headlines and Weather. 1.05 World Focus: Horizon. 2.00 World News and Weather. 2.30 Time Out: Top Gear. 3.00 World News. World Business Report. Asia Today and 24 Hours. 6.00 World News and Weather. 6.30 World Focus: Correspondent.

Radio 4

92.4-94.6 MHz; 198 kHz (1514)

7.00am News Briefing. 7.30 Something Understood. 7.55 Weather. 8.00 News. 8.10 Sunday Papers. 8.55 On Your Farm. 9.40 Sunday. 9.50 The Week's Good Cause. 9.55 Weather. 10.00 News. 10.10 Sunday Papers. 10.45 Letter from America. 10.50 Morning Service. 11.55 On This Day. 11.15 The Archers. 12.35 Mediterranean. 12.45 Books and Company. 1.15 Desert Island Discs. 1.55 Weather. 2.00 The World This Weekend. 2.55 Shipping Forecast. 3.00 Gardeners' Question Time. 3.30 Classic Serial: Rogue Herries. 4.30 Pick of the Week. 5.15 Analysis. 5.50 Waldon Goes Walkabout. 6.30 Poetry Please! 6.55 Shipping Forecast. 6.55 Weather. 7.00 Six O'Clock News. 7.30 In Business. 8.00 Children's BBC Radio 4: Joe's Kingdom. 8.30 Dancing for a Living. 9.00 (LW) Open University. 9.00 (FM) The Natural History Programme. 9.30 (FM) Witnesses. 10.00 (FM) Growing Spaces. 10.30 (FM) Costing the Earth. 10.59 Weather. 11.00 News. 11.05 All in the Mind. 11.45 Breakaway. 12.15 New Letters. 12.45 Seeds of Faith. 1.00 News. 1.30 Bells on Sunday. 1.30 Late Story: The Labour In Vain. 1.45 Shipping Forecast. 2.00 As World Service.

BBC World Service

7.00am Newsday. 7.30 Play of the Week: The Glass Menagerie. 9.00 News. 9.15 Letter From America. 9.30 Jazz Expo. 10.00 News. 10.10 Pause For Thought. 10.15 Short Story. 10.15 The Greenfield Collection. 11.00 News. 11.05 Write On. 11.15 F.O.O.G. 11.45 Sports Roundup. 12.00 Newsdesk. 12.30 Global Business. 1.00 Newsdesk. 1.30 Anything Goes. 2.00 News in German. 2.15 In Praise of God. 3.00 Newshour. 4.00 News. 4.01 International Question Time. 5.00 News. 5.05 Sports Roundup. 5.15 Concert Hall. 5.30 News in German. 6.00 Europe Today. 6.30 Sunday Sportsworld. 7.00 News. 7.01 Anatomy Of Addiction. 7.30 Weekend. 7.45 Sports Roundup. 8.00 Newsdesk. 8.30 Play of the Week: The Glass Menagerie. 8.30 Anything Goes. 10.00 Newshour. 11.00 News. 11.05 Write On. 11.15 Britain Today. 11.30 Music Review. 12.00 Newsdesk. 12.30 Health Matters. 12.45 Sports Roundup. 1.00 News. 1.05 Science View. 1.10 The Making of Hamlet. 1.35 Pop Short. 1.30 In Praise of God. 2.00 Newsdesk. 2.30 Short Story. 2.45 Britain Today. 3.00 Newsdesk. 3.30 Pick of the World. 4.00 Newsday. 4.30 Meridian Feature. 5.00 News. 5.05 Write On. 5.15 Sports Roundup. 5.30 Europe Today. 6.00 Newsdesk. 6.30 Europe Today.

The Movie Channel

● Astra

7.25 The Feminine Touch. 9.00 Samson and Sally. 10.10 Far From Home: The Adventures of Yellow Dog. 11.35 Stella. 1.00 Billy Budd. 3.00 Hart to Hart: Secrets of the Hart. 5.00 Leapin' Leprechauns! 7.00 Lassie. 9.00 Bye Bye, Love. 11.00 Species. 12.50 The Movie Show. 1.20 Love, Cheat and Steal. 3.00 Dream Lover. 4.45 Rikki and Pete.

Sky Movies

● Astra

7.00 The Muppets Take Manhattan. 8.45 The Patsy. 10.35 Ice Castles. 12.25 Little Buddha. 2.45 The Mask. 4.30 The Muppets Take Manhattan. 6.15 Where the River Runs Black. 8.00 The Mask. 10.00 Dumb and Dumber. 12.00 La Reine Margot. 2.25 The Kremlin Letter. 4.25 Spenser: Ceremony.

Sky Sports

● Astra

8.00 Snowboard Show. 8.30 Ice Hockey: NHL Power Week. 9.30 Boxing: Big Time. 11.30 Goals on Sunday. 1.00 Rugby. 3.00 Superbikes: San Marino - Live. 5.30 Football: Futbol Mundial. 6.00 Boxing: Big Time. 7.00 Football: Carlisle United Vs Colchester United. 7.30 Rugby League: Sheffield Eagles Vs Leeds Rhinos - Live. 9.30 Cricket: West Indies Vs India - Fifth Test - Live. 11.00 Spanish Football. 12.30 Football: Futbol Mundial. 1.00 Wrestling. 3.00 Goals on Sunday. 4.30 Close.

Eurosport

● Astra/Eutelsat

8.00 Equestrianism: Volvo World Cup. 9.00 Tennis: Japan Open. 11.00 Motorcycling: Japanese Grand Prix. 12.00 Walking: IAAF World Cup - Live. 1.00 Motorcycling: Japanese Grand Prix. 2.30 Tennis: Trofeo Conde de Godo Final - Live. 6.00 Cycling: Liege to Bastogne. 8.00 Swimming. 8.00 Motosport. 11.00 Motorcycling: Japanese Grand Prix. 1.00 Rally: 1997 Morocco Classic. 1.30 Close.

Sky One

● Astra

7.00 Hour of Power. 8.00 Orson and Olivia. 8.30 Dolly and Friends. 9.00 Press Your Luck. 9.30 The Love Connection. 10.00 Quantum Leap. 11.00 Kung Fu: The Legend Continues. 12.00 Hit Mix '97. 1.00 World Wrestling Federation: Superstars. 2.00 Code Three. 2.30 Sea Rescue. 3.00 Star Trek. 4.00 Star Trek: The Next Generation. 5.00 Star Trek: Deep Space Nine. 6.00 Star Trek: Voyager. 7.00 The Simpsons. 7.30 The Simpsons. 8.00 Early Edition. 9.00 The New Adventures of Superman. 10.00 The X-Files. 11.00 Millennium. 12.00 Forever Knight. 1.00 Daddy Dearest. 1.30 L.A.P.D. 2.00 Civil Wars. 3.

Community service for 'ashamed' boxer

Gary Younge

IN a rare show of public remorse former boxing champion Chris Eubank yesterday said he was "deeply ashamed" at his conduct after he was ordered to do 200 hours community service for causing grievous bodily harm to two women who were badly burned at a New Year's Eve fireworks display.

Amanda Marsden, 39, and Anita Wyness, 30, suffered face, neck and shoulder burns when powerful fireworks, some of which have since been prohibited, exploded during a event staged by Eubank on Brighton beach in 1995.

Lewes crown court heard how debris was sent showering on to the esplanade and fireworks went off in all directions. People fled for cover, including a man who hid behind a wall when a rocket passed him at head height.

Eubank, who recently converted to Islam and changed his name to Hamdan (meaning "thanks to God"), pleaded guilty to charges of causing grievous bodily harm. He told the court he was "extremely and deeply ashamed for what had happened to the girls".

The women, from Swindon, Wiltshire, left court without commenting. They are taking civil action against Eubank, 30, for damages.

Michael Warren, prosecuting, said although some of the fireworks could be bought in shops, others were "category four" — for use at professionally-run displays. They included "mortar bombs" fired from a tube and Eubank had taped together up to 20 fireworks.

As the two women walked by the display — originally intended to entertain Eubank's wife and two small children — there was a loud bang which made Miss Wyness scream, followed by another enormous explosion which made both jump in the air.

The explosion sent Eubank running in the opposite direction and once the explosion had subsided Eubank came running back through the thick smoke asking anyone was hurt.

"They looked at each other and noticed each other was on fire," said Mr Warren. "Burning debris had effectively come down on their clothing and set fire to their clothing."

In panic, the women tried to knock out the flames, the court heard.

Sentencing Eubank, Judge Richard Brown said: "Nobody suggests for one moment you had any intention that night of causing any harm to anybody else, but the fact remains your incredibly reckless conduct led to two ladies suffering horrific and permanent injury."

He added: "I hope in your case such an order could utilise your undoubtedly sporting talent for the benefit of the younger members of the community."

Eubank was also ordered to pay £1,140 costs.

Chris Eubank arriving at Lewes crown court yesterday PHOTOGRAPH: TOM SMITH

Blood from HIV donor infects patients

Owen Bowcott

A LOOPHOLE in testing procedures has led to three transfusion patients contracting HIV, the National Blood Service admitted yesterday.

A sample from a donor in the North West — taken shortly after the person contracted HIV last summer — could not be detected by standard screening methods.

It is only the second incident of HIV infection being passed on by blood transfusion in Britain since testing was introduced in 1985. One of the patients has died of an unrelated illness. The other two, and the original donor, are receiving counselling and medical support.

"This is an extremely rare occurrence," said NBS medical director Angela Robinson, who added: "Patients requiring blood transfusion can be reassured that this country is among the safest in the world."

Neither the identity nor sex of those involved has been disclosed, nor is it known whether the donor was aware of being at risk when the blood was given.

Last night the NBS said the donor may not have given honest answers to a questionnaire designed to determine whether they were in a high-risk category. However, no prosecution is expected.

A similar case, involving the same loophole in testing, occurred in Scotland in 1986 when two people became HIV positive after transfusions.

The problem exists because the virus is difficult to detect in the first 20 or 30 days after infection. Routine screening tests produce false negatives.

The latest incident was uncovered after one of the patients became ill. Medical examination confirmed they had become HIV positive and re-testing samples from their transfusions led back to the infected donor. Only three people had been given products *from the same person's* blood.

A more sensitive laboratory procedure, the Polymerase Chain Reaction test, can expose traces of early infections but it is not yet commercially available. The PCR test was used in this case to confirm that the donor's blood had been infected. All samples taken from donors at the time they give blood are kept routinely for two years in case such backdated checks have to be made.

Since 1985 there have been more than 30 million blood donations in this country. "The risk of anyone in the UK being infected with HIV by a transfusion is negligible," an NBS spokeswoman said.

The service said there were no plans to review procedures, but it hoped the PCR test would be developed for routine use in the coming years.

Nick Partridge, executive director of the Terrence Higgins Trust, highlighted the fact that those at greatest risk of HIV should not be giving blood. "But it also points up the fact that those who know they are not at risk should give blood to continue to provide a supply," he said.

> 'Patients can be reassured that this country is among the safest in the world'

John Spiers, chairman of the Patients' Association, said it would be wrong to blame the hospital and blood service authorities. "Our view would be that the responsibility of the donor must be emphasised.

"Clearly, it's very important that blood donors continue to come forward, but if they think they are in a high-risk category, if they are bisexual, actively homosexual or an intravenous drug user, they must not give blood.

"The blood authority cannot be more rigorous and careful than it is being."

He said prosecuting donors who deliberately hid the fact they were in a high risk group might be a deterrent, but he did not know if the law *would allow it.*

Since 1982 there have been 28,447 recorded cases of HIV infection in the UK and 9,678 people have died of Aids. More than 1,200 haemophiliacs have contracted HIV from infected blood products.

Couple killed in African ambush

A FORMER British soldier and his wife have been found murdered in Mozambique, the Foreign Office said yesterday.

The bodies of Andrew McGowan, aged 35, and his wife Caroline, 30, were found near the Malawian border on Thursday, a spokesman said.

They had been shot dead and are thought to have been ambushed as they travelled from Harare, Zimbabwe, to their home in Lilongwe, Malawi. They are believed to have died four days ago.

The couple had lived in Malawi since 1993. Mr McGowan, a former captain in the Royal Fusiliers, was a financial and business consultant, while Mrs McGowan was a teacher in Lilongwe.

Mr McGowan's parents, Ian and Phylis McGowan, live in Fleet, Hampshire.

Mrs McGowan's parents, Edmund and Anne Smitheram, live in Ipswich, Suffolk. Mr Smitheram is the deputy head of the Royal Hospital school in Ipswich, which yesterday released a statement on his behalf.

The school's headmaster, Nicholas Ward, said: "It appears that while travelling through Mozambique on their way home from Harare their vehicle was ambushed and hijacked."

Mr Smitheram and his wife were told of their daughter's death on Thursday night and were said to be "distraught".

"Neither Andrew's parents ... nor Mr and Mrs Smitheram wish to make further comment for the time being," Mr Ward said.

Mrs McGowan, a former Royal Hospital school sixth-former, taught at the Bishop MacKenzie school in Lilongwe. Her father had been at the Royal Hospital school for 13 years.

Mr Ward said the tragedy had affected everyone at the school. "We are a very close community here, a school of 660 pupils," he said. "When something like this happens everybody feels involved."

The Foreign Office said it advised Britons to be wary of the danger of bandit attacks in Mozambique. However, no extra advice was being issued as a result of the murder of Mr and Mrs McGowan, a Foreign Office spokesman said.

Foreign Office officials were pressing for an inquiry into the killings, he said.

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BELLING 314 Green Electric 500mm width/Double oven Programmer £399.99
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On current, endearing Prescott form, everything comes out minced anyway. He wanted the Essex firemen's strike settled by 'meditation'

And where was the party of piety and fearless truth? Holy mackerel! Captain Ashdown warns haddock shoal: Cross this regional border and be fried

The day the election caught

ONE STEP BACK

The explosion should have been no surprise but it meant Europe consumed the headlines day after day. **Peter Preston** surveys the fifth week of the campaign

TONY Blair had promised a switch to "vision and conviction". Honest John Prescott had apparently begun to redeem his pledge by informing the restaurant critic of the Sunday Times: "You can't tell the truth all the time, can you?" It was the most promising start to an election week so far. Brain food, not junk food.

Alas, 15 minutes later we were piling the leftover burgers on the plastic tray again and binning them. Not a reflection on Honest John, who said A A Gill had made a shepherd's pie of his quotes. You had to believe him since — on current, endearing Prescott form — everything comes out minced anyway. He wanted the Essex firemen's strike settled by "meditation". Yesterday he roundly condemned the "IRR" and "IRE" attacks on Leeds railway station. Fireproofed incomprehensibility.

No, the real trouble was that the dish of the day was fish. I have to declare an interest. I eat fish, and have taken a little trouble to understand the politics of fish. Obviously a terrible mistake.

Scientists — the men in white coats whose word we instantly heed when they're talking BSE — think we're fishing the seas around our continent to extinction, as the Canadians have already done to their own waters. Europe wants a 30 per cent cut to give innocent, non-voting cod a chance to breed.

We knew Mr Major would talk defiance and quota-hopping. He could hardly point out that some Dutch and Spanish fishermen, at the start of the 90s, had bought the boats and licences of British trawlermen perfectly legally under single market rules — and that the Brits had sold them because HM Treasury wouldn't match the generous decommissioning grants Brussels was dishing out to everyone. Where's the shark bite in that?

John Horam . . . obscure minister whose words on Europe were deemed 'unwise'

But did Labour have to froth in tune with him? And where was the party of piety and fearless truth? The Liberal Democrats (it emerged) have a paragraph at the bottom of page 58 of their manifesto which ties them to "abolishing the Common Fisheries Policy and replacing it with a new Europe-wide fisheries policy based on the regional policy of fish stocks".

Holy mackerel! Captain Ashdown warns haddock shoal: Cross this regional border and be fried. Why on earth was he saying these things? Remember Harold Wilson long ago promising his audience that a royal dockyard would never be closed. "And why do I say this?" said Harold. Voice from hall: "Because you're in Chatham." Mr Ashdown was in Cornwall.

Enough stinking fish, but only the beginning of Europe proper. We'd had it coming to us. It was remarkable that weeks of campaigning had passed without anyone raising the E-word or the S-word or the F (for federal) word. What was truly bizarre was the way the Conservatives pulled the sword from up their jumpers and then proceeded to swallow it.

Elections — because rooted in unreality — have a habit of being amazed by the obvious. It has been obvious that the Conservatives are utterly, hopelessly riven on Europe ever since the Spice Girls threw away their gymslips. What else have the Westminster years since 1992 been about? How else did they get into this fine mess?

But we were supposed to feel in shock when the news (with a little help from the Daily Mail) broke. John Major, in one of those master-class interludes of detail he's famous for, had shrugged off his backbenchers doing their own berserk thing, but decided the "fantasy" of ministers bucking government policy. The fantasy, of course, was his. There followed a frenetic game of textual analysis which made a shooting star of John Horam, an exceedingly junior and obscure health minister.

I know of Mr Horam because he's married to a former Guardian motoring correspondent, and must be a man of some good taste. Old Labour and Social Democrat MPs know of him because he was once one of them, passing through. But did the earth quake because he wasn't keen on monetary union — especially when, scratching his ear in the front garden, he turned out to be in full support of Mr Major's wait-and-see?

Apparently so. The Hezza lexicon of reprimand was scanned to produce the word "unwise", dumped over Horam's rose bushes. Only the Referendum Government will make him Foreign Secretary now. Yet the effect was still akin to those early tremors in Dante's Peak where a few kids get boiled in a swimming

The war of Kohl's knee

Major defends ad attacking Blair as a Euro-dummy

Rebecca Smithers and Andrew Culf

A DEFIANT John Major yesterday refused to apologise for the Tories' controversial new advertisement featuring Tony Blair sitting on Chancellor Kohl's knee, even though it was attacked as "puerile" and "pathetic" by MPs from all parties and sparked complaints from the public.

He added fuel to the flames last night by accusing Mr Blair of "naivete and inexperience" and warning that sending him to European Union talks would be like sending "a fly to a spiders' convention".

His comments came after a day of complaints against the advertisement and the Advertising Standards Authority disclosing that it would investigate whether advertisement contravened its code of practice, which prohibits the portrayal of politicians in an adverse or offensive way.

The German government distanced itself from the row, claiming it was its policy not to comment on election campaigns in other countries, but Ruprecht Polenz, a member of Chancellor Kohl's CDU party, whose members often work with the Tories in the European Parliament, told BBC Radio 4's PM programme: "I see the situation of our Tory colleagues in the campaign and that they are a bit desperate and that they look for a straw to catch. If you are so desperate you easily can lose your mind."

However, delighted Tory strategists said the advertisement — developed from an idea by the Deputy Prime Minister, Michael Heseltine — conveyed such a "powerful image" that they could not rule out using it again.

The advertisement, which appeared in national newspapers yesterday, depicted Mr Blair as a ventriloquist's dummy, apparently being controlled by the German leader. It highlighted Mr Blair's lack of experience, suggesting it would make him ill-equipped to negotiate in Europe, and warned: "Don't send a boy to do a man's job."

Mr Major insisted that the advertisement was making a serious point to underline his claim that Mr Blair had already given up Britain's negotiating stance ahead of the Amsterdam summit of European heads of government in June.

He told the Tories' morning news conference: "The advertisement makes that point very vividly." He mockingly painted a picture of Mr Blair turning up at Amsterdam and saying: "If you don't have a seat, I'll have a knee."

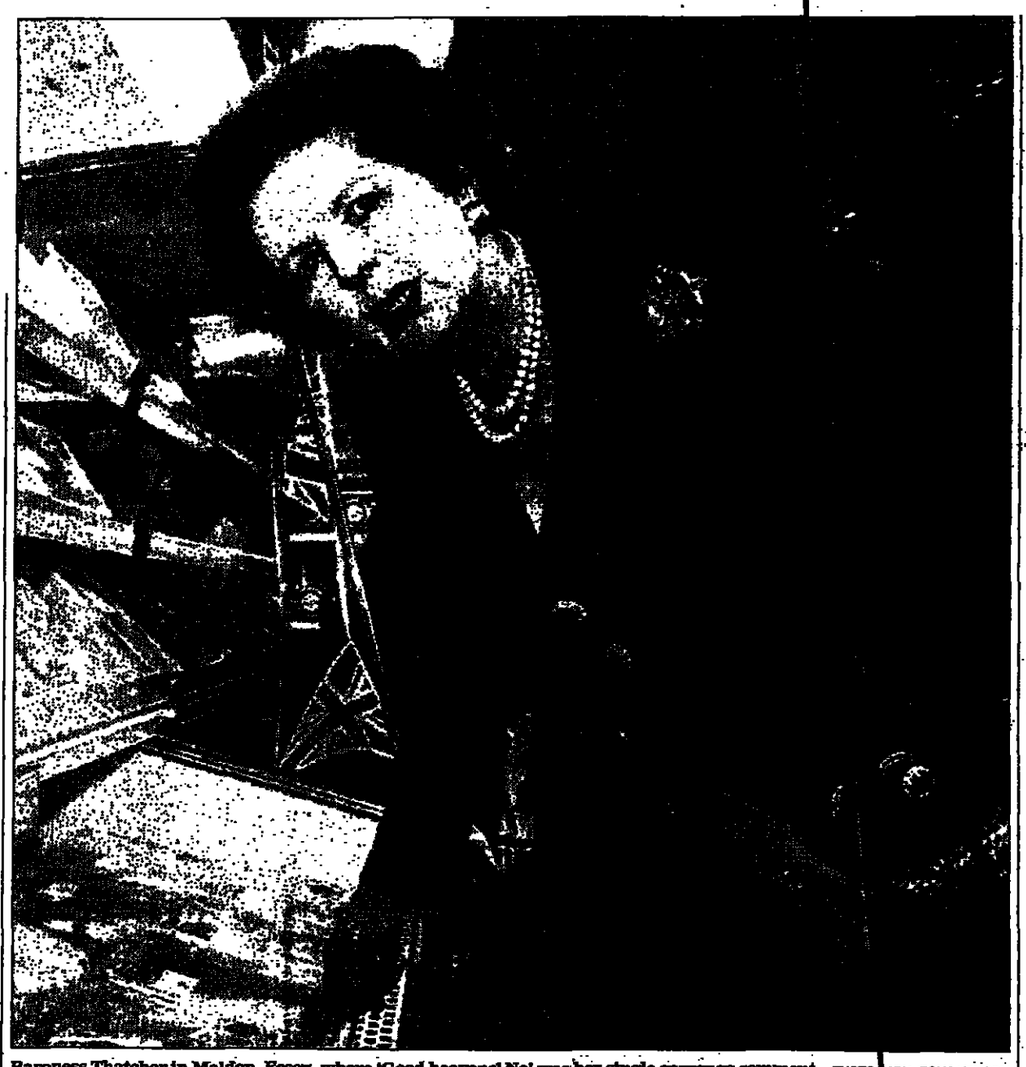
But pro-European Tory MP Edwina Currie described the advertisement as "puerile" and offensive to Mr Kohl. "We should not be portraying Chancellor Kohl as an ogre of any kind."

An ASA spokesman said it had received 20 complaints from members of the public. Many of the objectors were concerned about the negative image the advertisement might give Britain's EU partners, while others considered it offensive to both Mr Kohl and Mr Blair.

Controversy over political advertising flared last year when the Conservatives' demon eyes poster, captioned "New Labour, New Danger" attracted 167 complaints. The ASA asked the Conservatives not to use it again because it considered it depicted the Labour leader Tony Blair as sinister and dishonest.

Labour strategists said the Kohl advert was an indication of the "panic and desperation" in the Tory ranks.

The Prime Minister's own wait-and-see position on Europe was further damaged yesterday as Lady Thatcher entered the single currency row during a visit to Maldon in the Essex constituency of Euro-sceptic John Whittingdale. She was asked whether Britain should enter the single European currency and replied: "Good heavens. No!"



Baroness Thatcher in Maldon, Essex, where 'Good heavens! No' was her single currency comment PHOTOGRAPH: FIONA HANSON

Hoots of laughter from streets of Bonn

Ian Traynor in Bonn

THE notion of Labour lapdogs perched on the knees of German puppet masters provoked mirth, giggles, and bemused headshaking on the streets of Bonn yesterday, while the political establishment declined to dignify the Conservative propaganda with substantial comment.

Shown the advertisement of a Tony Blair puppet astride the ample frame of Chancellor Helmut Kohl, Erhard Koenig, aged 67, a retired gardener, hooted with laughter.

"I suppose that's the English papers up to mischief again. They get away with murder," he said, mistaking the Tory campaign tactics for the antics of the British tabloids, notorious in Germany.

Bruno Schmidt, aged 42, a civil servant, made the same error. "The press can get away with anything. Well, that's OK, you've got freedom of expression like we have."

Peter Hausmann, spokesman for Mr Kohl, said he had not "diverted" the Chancellor by bringing the advert to his attention and was reluctant to comment. "It's not our problem," he laughed. "This is an internal British affair."

Told that the picture was the work of a political party, Mr Schmidt shook his head. "No political party here could get away with that. It's different in England. But the message is completely wrong. Germany does not determine what happens in Europe and it certainly does not determine British policy on Europe, just look at the BSE crisis and EU policy generally. There's nothing insulting about this to a German. It's just stupid."

One young office worker who did not want her name published said: "The Tories have got it wrong, because we know Tony Blair is not any more open to Europe than John Major.

"You don't see that kind of thing in our papers, because it's very polemical and we don't like that."

Horst Christmann, aged 39, a construction worker, snorted: "It's all theatre. It's a caricature. I don't believe Blair is in Kohl's pocket and I hope he wins just like I hope the Social Democrats kick Kohl out next year. This is very negative campaigning, like the Americans, not like here."

Mr Koenig also thought the Tory attack was wide of the mark. "The English as Germany's puppets?" he asked. "Never. The British go their own way. They've always been independent and they always will be."

Them on Us, page 6

Below the belt but no surprise

Advertising

Tony Brignull

THE Conservative advertisement portraying Tony Blair as Chancellor Kohl's dummy, which ran yesterday in the Tory press, has really put the cat among the doves: outrage all round, screams of foul, abhorrence of this knocking campaign, disgusting, degrading, etc.

Well, I like it. In my book an ad hasn't worked unless your competitor threatens to sue. "Don't send a boy to do a man's job," the line at the bottom of the ad, is certainly below the belt but it's powerful.

Why anyone should be surprised, let alone affronted, beats me. This is street-fighting. This is what the Tories and M&C Saatchi do best. When have they ever been otherwise? And when has Labour ever had an answer?

The day before, the Tories ran another ad attacking Labour and pledging: 1. Not to take Britain into a federal European state; 2. To keep Britain out of Europe's job-destroying social chapter; and 3. Not to join a single currency without a referendum.

Now, let's pause a moment. What are they hoping to gain by this? Two things: they are trying to exploit Labour's perceived softness on Europe. They hope Tony Blair will get flustered and make some injudicious comment or merely sit on the fence.

In addition, they are clearly targeting their own Euro-sceptics, none of whom they evidently feel read the Guardian, for the ads did not appear in this newspaper. The omission is regrettable for they are almost certainly wrong: we surely do have a fair share of Euro-sceptics among our readers, as do the Labour Party and the Lib Dems among their supporters.

Not that these advertisement would convince them one way or another for in truth they are not addressing Euro-sceptics at all but Europhobes, those who would once have gone to the barricades to defend the threepenny bit and are now massing under the misty and mystical banners of British sovereignty.

The copy which purports to shine a clear light on the subject is actually smearing the lens with innuendo. Those little words "job destroying" give the clue. It must have been with some restraint that the duplicitous Frogs and the filthy Hun were not directly blamed.

These ads might reassure the nervous and insecure Tory voters of Middle England but they further the argument not at all. If there is to be a referendum, I can envisage that Brussels, in despair at our lack of enlightened debate, might have to pay for space to tell us precisely what a federal Europe means, or what a single currency implies beyond the notes in our purses. One wonders how many voters could write 500 clear words on the subject.

'Not that these ads would convince Euro-sceptics for they are addressing those who would once have defended the threepenny bit and are now massing under the misty and mystical banners of sovereignty'

No politician, spin-doctor or copywriter is prepared to risk it. The media campaigns so far are heavy on promise and threat but light on vision, especially of Britain's role in Europe. Mr Major, aware of the divisions in the ranks, is grudging his way through the mud of Flanders, hoping it will all be over by Christmas and he'll be back in Blighty. Will the next Tory press ad show him stepping from the Eurostar saying I have in my hand a piece of paper?

Meanwhile, on the home front, the Tories have countered Labour's promissory posters with their best piece of work so far: Boom or Gloom, it says. Boom is the strategy behind which the Conservatives are throwing their considerable resources. They are right, I believe, to do so. Concentrating their fire power on this single word might give the wavering voter pause for thought.

In this battle of attrition, the difference between the parties is increasingly semantic and over the same few yards of meaning. The advice in the Tory trenches is to keep your head down if you want promotion and wait for the final push.

It is time for Labour to attack but Mr Blair must not get drawn into the dirty fight which the Conservatives are trying to provoke.

What did Major's two days on top of the volcano tell us? That he'd given up on his rabble of a party who could vote any way they liked

Brown has all the animation of a speak-your-weight machine; but a penny in the slot gets his cogs whirring. Cook will probably bite Helmut on the knee

fire, and Major blew his top

pond. Even scientists wouldn't have expected the whole mountain to blow.

Full credit to John Major. Without his passionate, lacerating explosion — streams of verbal lava engulfing sceptics and doubters as they fled frenziedly from Smith Square — we might never have watched Europe consume the headlines day after day.

We might never have seen a collectors' item of a TV commercial where the lights kept going out and you half expected Jimmy Goldsmith (who'd used an identical set the day before) to wander in and wave his arms.

We might never have thought it worth asking, at a follow-up press conference, whether he'd give the bastards a free vote on Europe. We might never have heard of Joe Bloggs. We might never have seen the boy Tony sitting on Helmut's knee.

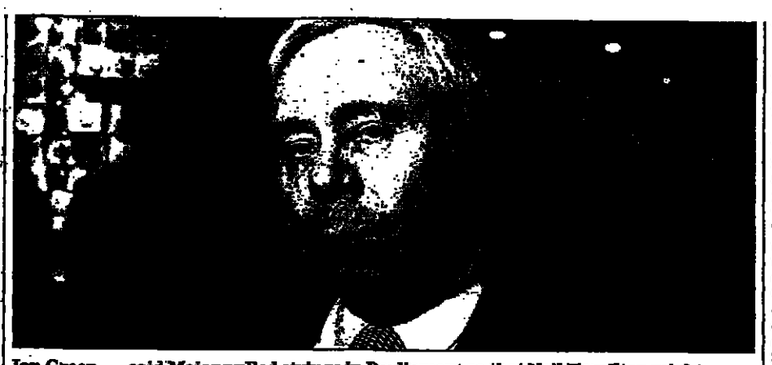
What did Mr Major's two days on top of the volcano tell us?

That he'd given up on his rabble of a party who could vote any way they liked — and he'd have told them so two years ago if anyone had been bright enough to ask.

That Tony Blair couldn't, possibly negotiate for Britain because all he'd done was get his party under control. That the giant of principle who found John Horam unwise, but unsackable, would face down Helmut Kohl in six weeks, as long as Maurice Saatchi didn't come with him.

That *(sotto voce)* EMU might be a jolly good thing and we'd see "a drift of business from the City of London into Europe" if it was. But tell that to the next leader of the Conservative Party, who I've orchestrated things to make absolutely sure can't be Bloggs.

The unemployment figures continue to fall in comforting chunks. Inflation is under brilliant control. This is the first time since the war that the Conservatives won't have left Labour with an economic migraine to feed pills to. It is the election, on all known psephological form, where the party in power ought to be romping to victory.



Ian Greer . . . said Major pulled strings in Parliament so that Neil Hamilton might sue

What has gone so abysmally wrong? Europe of course. It is oddly fashionable to sympathise with a leader leading the unleadable over a cliff. This week Mr Major shouted "Charge" and moved the cliff nearer the cavalry. If he is, as some pundits say, more interested now in his place in history, he fell headlong off a pile of books in the Bodleian overnight.

Without Europe, though, how would he be faring? Reasonably on health, where Labour's alleged axeing of 20,000 NHS bureaucrats is the biggest direct threat to the jobless figures in sight. (Why not a matching cull of New Labour spin doctors?) Reasonably on education, where the curse of the Oratory and the spending blight of Brown exalts words above action. Reasonably on privatisation, where Labour keeps getting out policy before wicket. (When Mr Prescott "warns there are only 14 days to save the NHS", did he mean save the Gatwick Express?)

No, without Europe there would only be sleaze as a running sore. We have Mr Ian Greer's biographical word for it that his ex-managing director told porkies to Tatton Tories at Mr Hamilton's adoption meeting. We have his further word that Mr Major — conniving with Neil and Christine in a secret meeting — pulled the strings which (neutrally, hands-off, of course) saw Parliament ditch 300 years of history in order that Neil might sue — or not, as the case was. The second great disaster, personally crafted in No 10.

Tony Blair said something unprecedented the other day: that he would win, that "we shall take office in a fortnight". No familiar cotton wool caution; no doubts at last. Last week was "wobbly Wednesday" with the Millbank doctors in a spin. This week began (in Mail and Express land) with nerves jangling as "private party polls" showed a *dramatically* shrinking gap. Hooey. Three days later those private polls were confirming what public polls from the self-same pollsters reported — that the lead has barely shrunk at all.

They think it's all over. It will be soon. And it is by no means too soon to begin a few prior assessments in Chris Woodhead mode.

Michael Heseltine, finally, looks dog-tired and dead depressed. The PM doesn't bother to tell the deputy PM everything. Ken Clarke, who should be the hero of the hour, seems to be playing provincial rep, drinking beer and walking away from cameramen.

Gordon Brown has all the animation of a speak-your-weight machine; but at least the penny in the slot gets his cogs whirring. Robin Cook will probably bite Helmut on the knee. But, in fact, the truth is that no reputations — bar those of Mo Mowlam and maybe Paddy Ashdown, Action Gramps — have burgeoned since campaigning began.

That is beginning to be the real problem for New Labour. They opened with a dominant, popular Blair whipping a bedraggled, petulant Major. Nothing the Prime Minister has done since has looked very bright. He opened the lid on his own black hole. He is smiling the smile of a gallant loser, trudging back to the pavilion taking his gloves off.

Yet the winner isn't taking the spoils. Mr Blair is sliding in the most interesting Gallup poll of the week (down to 36 per cent as "Best PM"). He is now, perversely, running behind the party he created almost single-handed. The TV ratings continue to slither ominously.

Conviction and vision? We must hope so, because otherwise the hounds will start to gnaw him from Day One. Real hounds with rabid teeth. Not that stupid bulldog, stupid.

The ermine beckons

David Hencke profiles four new peers

JOAN LESTOR used to campaign for abolition of the Lords. As the only woman in John Major's honours list she will now be content to back Labour's plan to throw out her newfound hereditary colleagues instead.

In the 1960s she argued for abolishing private schools and in the 1970s she resigned as a junior minister over nursery education cuts.

In her youth she was dubbed the "Titan-haired Brunhilde" by the Spectator magazine. In 1995 she won an apology from right-wing commentator Brian Crozier for being named in a book as a confidential contact of the Soviet embassy during the cold war. She quit her shadow overseas development post on health grounds last year.

The 65-year-old former MP for Eccles, who has also held shadow frontbench posts for women and children, intends to use her new position in the House of Lords to continue her campaigns for children and more money for the third world, which she believes should have a new priority. She has two adopted children, and celebrated John Major's honour bestowed upon her yesterday by making muffins for her grandchildren.

JOHN PATTEN is a classic Tory meritocrat — a gardener's son who became a Cabinet minister. During his rise to power he rivalled David Mellor, the disgraced cabinet minister, in publicity stunts to attract attention. As Health Minister Patten promoted the stark tombstone Aids warnings, while Mr Mellor in the Home Office went on high-profile anti-drug missions to Colombian jungles and the Khyber Pass. When Patten got to the Home Office he was less successful, taking the blame for rising burglaries after a high-profile campaign to stop break-ins.

The peak of his career was being appointed Education Secretary, but there he became a recluse, rarely talking to journalists. After his sacking in 1994 following bruising confrontations with the teaching unions over school testing he cut a lonely figure in the House of Commons.

A staunch Roman Catholic, this witty, donnish figure, who is still more of an old-fashioned Tory wet, should play a more active role in the Lords, after giving up his Oxford West and Abingdon seat. His one claim to fame is said to be the invention of the term "lager lout" — a phrase that is still in the public mind long after Patten left office.

ROY HATTERSLEY, the 64-year-old former deputy Labour Party leader, has moved steadily to the left since he resigned his party post and returned to the backbenches after the 1992 general election defeat.

The retiring MP for Birmingham Sparkbrook, once described as "the Prince of Weathercocks", reached the Cabinet as Secretary of State for Prices and Consumer Protection in the 1970s under Jim Callaghan. In the early 1980s he was involved in Labour's fight against the Militant Tendency and the hard left. He easily beat leftwinger Michael Meacher for the deputy leadership in 1983.

Since Tony Blair became Labour leader Hattersley has positioned himself more to the left, defending comprehensive education and generally acting as the conscience for Old Labour values.

A gourmet who is often seen in the best and most fashionable London restaurants, he loves both lobster and Yorkshire pudding. He has combined politics with journalism, and consistently supported Sheffield Wednesday since the age of 11.

DAVID ALTON is one of the most independent-minded MPs in the Liberal Democrat Party. A working-class Catholic cockney, he got into Parliament in 1979 on the back of the pavement politics of Liberal council leader, Sir Trevor Jones. Earlier, as Liverpool housing chairman, Alton, aged 46, once put up for sale three notorious Liverpool tower blocks, the Piggeries, for 10p.

He is unbudgeable in his anti-abortion views, introducing the controversial Abortion Amendment Bill in 1991. (It failed.) He also refused to agree to the first Commons privileges committee report on the "cash for questions" scandal until the relevant files had been sent to Sir Gordon Downey, the Parliamentary Commssioner for Standards, before Neil Hamilton's libel action against the Guardian had collapsed.

Alton has been variously described as a rebellious choirboy, the Cliff Richard of political life, and a "pious 13-year-old swot". He decided not to seek another seat when his Liverpool constituency, Mossley Hill, was in effect abolished by the Boundary Commission.

Why I'm voting Labour

Tories' Europe turmoil frightens business

Chris Haskins

I HAVE always voted Labour but the difference is that now I can say it publicly without frightening the shareholders — because the Labour Party does not scare them any more.

The way Tories are behaving over Europe is frightening the wits out of serious business people. Labour will have a much better relationship with Europe and a lot of people will vote for them this time who have not voted for them in the past.

The Tories are in turmoil. They cannot be considered a serious party for business until they resolve their problems, and I despair of what will happen if they are re-elected.

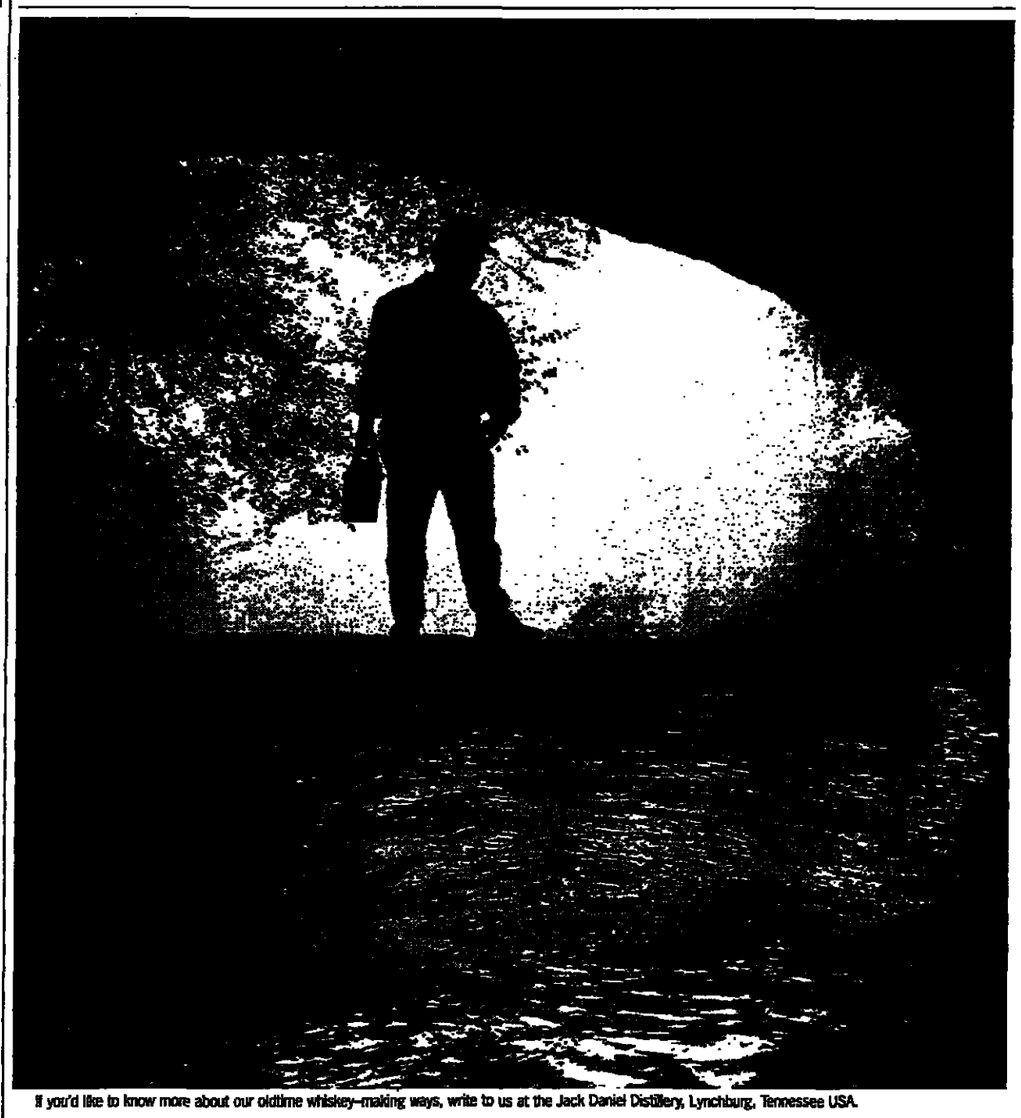
The sleaze issue is very important. But I do feel sorry for John Major because all these brown envelopes were flying around long before he took over. He has been a victim of circumstance.

He is a nice man. He would make a very good executive chairman of a plc but he does not have the toughness to deal with the Euro-sceptics.

Blair is not such a nice man but leadership is about toughness and integrity. He has been very brave about the reforms such as Clause 4 and he is also distant and you need that in a good leader. He still has a lot to prove but I am confident he will be a good prime minister.

If he wins it will be a final rejection of Thatcherism, rather than a rejection of John Major. The Tories keep looking back to the days of the empire which disappeared 60 years ago and we have got to look to the future.

Chris Haskins is chairman of Northern Foods. Interview by Kate Watson-Smyth



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JACK DANIEL'S TENNESSEE WHISKEY

Grassroots move for vote deals

Rebecca Smithers
Political Correspondent

LABOUR and the Liberal Democrats yesterday denied the existence of any formal voting deals between the two parties, despite growing signs in some areas of "tactical campaigning" to help force Tories out.

But the Liberal Democrats' election campaign chief, Lord Holme, defended the right of Labour supporters in Southport and other areas to campaign for tactical voting in favour of his party.

Lord Holme said: "We want people to cast an effective vote. There is no doubt for many people in many constituencies their overriding wish is to get rid of this shambolic government."

The issue surfaced yesterday after evidence came to light that Labour supporters in Lewes, Southport, and Kingston and Surbiton had been campaigning on behalf of Lib Dems.

In Lewes a dozen Labour members were expelled for this reason, while in Kingston and Surbiton Labour's agent, Derek Chester, resigned and said he was voting Liberal Democrat.

In Southport, the Tories claimed that the local Labour Party was financing a campaign to vote Lib Dem in order to unseat Tory Matthew Banks, defending a majority of just 3,063. Southport Liberal Democrats denied this was the case.

The fact remains that over the next 12 days there will be discreet persuasion behind the scenes — and in some cases even mailshots — in many Tory marginals by Labour members, urging people to vote Lib Dem.

A non-party campaign — dubbed GROT (Get Rid of Them) — to urge effective tactical voting has also emerged to focus on 79 marginal Tory seats.

In England, this would generally mean Labour or Liberal Democrat supporters switching to the other party. Elsewhere it might mean voting for the Scottish National Party or Plaid Cymru. At the last election the bulk of tactical voting was to the Tories' disadvantage, and cost them up to 10 seats.

Yesterday Liberal Democrat leader Paddy Ashdown said he preferred to talk about "effective" rather than "tactical" voting. Deputy leader Alan Beith said that some Labour supporters campaigning on behalf of Lib Dems were not doing so purely for tactical reasons.

Labour's shadow chancellor, Gordon Brown, denied any deals and insisted that Labour supporters were working hard to ensure as many Labour votes and to return as many Labour MPs as possible.

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Please, don't mention the war

ON US

German views of Britain are verging on the schizophrenic, **Ian Traynor** in Bonn writes

AS A German child fleeing Poland after the second world war, Thomas Kielinger arrived in Westfalia in 1946 near the levelled and rubble-strewn town of Münster.

Only two grand country houses were left standing, he recalls, appropriated by British army officers administering the region.

The locals' attitudes towards the British were moulded by amazement at the officers' conduct.

"They would stub their cigarettes out on the carpets and put their feet up on the tables," Mr Kielinger remembers. "With that kind of behaviour, Britain does not become a model for Germans."

This image of the slovenly, disorderly, and disrespectful British persists in Germany.

"In England the infrastructure is useless, the school system is lousy, the cooking's terrible. The material standard of living is much lower," says Michael Reichert, a Bonn entrepreneur. "Germans see England almost as a developing country."

Mr Kielinger, a media commentator who has written a book on Britain and Germany, is a fully-fledged member of Bonn's Anglophile set — an endangered species if opinion polls are to be believed.

Asked last year which foreign country was the best model for Germany, only 5 per cent of Germans polled opted for Britain. Twice as many chose France or the United States, and three times as many went for Japan. Switzerland and Sweden attracted 41 and 31 per cent.

Since then, German attitudes to the British have been coloured by rancour and recrimination over the BSE crisis, British tabloid excesses in the Euro soccer wars, and political sparring over Europe and the single currency.

In the present strained atmosphere, Germans view Brits — with a mixture of bemusement and exasperation — as not a little odd.

But while ordinary Joe German sees little worth emulating in the British way of life, attitudes are more favourable elsewhere.

The elite world of German bankers and businessmen increasingly looks enviously to the City of London, fat-cats culture of whopping pay rises, executive share options, downsizing, and the primacy of profit.

Similarly, the trendsetters in the fashion, design, and pop industries still see "groovy" London as the place to watch.

> 'The British are jealous of us. And they're fixated on the past, the war'

"London has never lost its importance as a magnet and a pop music centre for German youth," says Frank Bender of EMI records in Cologne. "The typical Britpop bands like Oasis and Blur are very popular here."

It may not be politically correct to say so, a leading industrialist, Hans-Olaf Henkel, remarked this week, but Germany could benefit from studying the lessons of Britain's economic recovery.

Opening the huge Hannover trade fair, Mr Henkel cited Britain as an exemplary "lean state" where privatisation, deregulation, and liberalisation had unleashed an entrepreneurial spirit better suited than Germany's to confronting the competitive challenges of globalisation.

Such praise from the head of Germany's equivalent of the Confederation of British Industry highlights the schizophrenic views of Britain in Germany.

Mr Reichert, aged 33, who runs a small catering business, is one of the tens of thousands of German tourists who spent almost 4 billion marks (£1.45 billion) in Britain last year. He is married to a Mancunian, and lived in Manchester for seven years before returning to the Rhineland.

"What gets me about the Brits," he says, "is the constant sarcasm, the taking the piss. They just go too far. They don't know when to stop. Even my mates when I was in Manchester would say 'oh, hi Adolf,' and give a Hitler salute. It gets on your nerves after a while."

Karl Lamers, a government foreign policy specialist, sees in Britain's ambivalent attitude towards the continent, especially the Germans, a fully-fledged identity crisis.

"With good reason, the British can see themselves as the moral victors of the second world war. But politically, they were losers like all of us," he said. "With respect, John Major is not De Gaulle ... What is going on in Great Britain is a real identity crisis. Despite all the frustration we feel, we have to try to understand the British."

Mr Reichert puts it differently. "The British are jealous of us. They think we've got things that they don't have. And they're fixated on the past, on the war. That stuff's not funny any more.

> 'People here only hear about the bad side. But the Brits are far friendlier'

It's high time to forget about that and put it behind us."

But despite the racial taunts, the tasteless jokes, and the lower standard of living in Britain, he is nostalgic for his Manchester days.

"People here only hear about the bad side: football hooligans, mad cows, negative things. But the Brits are far friendlier and more helpful. Materially I had a lower standard of living there, but I was happier.

"There's more to life than having the newest car, but the Germans don't see it that way. And they no longer want to work here. In Bury I was working 12-hour shifts and then they would ask me to work more overtime. Here they want a 32-hour week. It's ridiculous."

Mr Bender at EMI records says Anglo-American domination of the entertainment industry in Germany is not quite what it was.

"Although English pop music has always set the trends, our own bands are now much more successful here. It's the same in the film industry. We have our own techno scene, our own dance scene. Things are changing."

While political Germany hopes Britain will "come to its senses" after the election and temper its German-bashing and anti-Europeanism, at the more humdrum level Germans are not attracted by the racier side of Britain.

"They might appreciate the livelier pop culture and London's appeal as a magnet for the culturally wayward," says Mr Kielinger. "But Germans have a certain detachment towards that and separate those things from what they see as the rather downmarket lifestyle of the Brits."

Concluded

Today's planned deployment of Italian and Greek troops in Vlore, the port at the heart of the Albanian insurgency, has provoked mixed feelings in locals, many of whom are armed to the teeth and harbour bitter memories

Julian Borger spoke to them

Residents of Vlore eagerly digest the latest news in the morning papers about today's planned troop deployment PHOTOGRAPH: DIETHER ENDLICHER

Tempers rise as Albania plays reluctant host

TEN minutes before the Committee for Public Salvation was due to face the people of Vlore yesterday, Albert Shyti, its 26-year-old chairman, was struggling to forge a common platform from a noisy discord.

Some Italian officers of the newly-arrived multinational force had been to see him, and the committee had to make up its mind what it thought about them. Tempers were running high.

"Now, you know I have never tried to impose my will by force," Mr Shyti could be heard telling his committee.

"Well, don't tell me to shut my mouth, then," an enraged delegate shouted back.

Without warning, somebody began to recite a poem, listing the alleged sins of President Sali Berisha.

The voices echoed down the corridor from the schoolroom commandeered as the committee's headquarters.

At one heated moment, a man emerged grinning and carrying a pistol. He loaded the gun and walked out on to the street, shaking his head.

There are similar committees in a string of southern towns, set up after much of the population discovered that the "investment schemes" to which they had entrusted their savings were empty scams. The schemes collapsed three months ago.

When riot police were sent in to crush the subsequent protests they were driven out of town, along with the mayor.

Mr Shyti, with slicked-back hair, tapering sideburns and silver-buckled boots, won hearts in Vlore when he appeared on television at the height of the troubles.

President Berisha says that all the salvation committees must disappear before elections can be held on June 29.

On Thursday Franz Vranitzky, the former Austrian chancellor attempting to smooth the way to a peaceful poll, described the issue as "the hardest part of the election process".

In Vlore yesterday the committee did not appear a formidable obstacle. Since a new mayor and a new police chief were appointed earlier this month, Mr Shyti said, "real power has returned to local government".

> 'We welcome this multinational force as long as it sticks to its mission'

Life in the port did seem to be returning to a normal rhythm yesterday.

After street battles with the police in February, crowds of protesters broke into barracks and seized guns and ammunition. Officers at a naval base had to plead with them not to haul away torpedoes and depth charges.

Now Vlore's mornings begin with the hollow boom of local anglers dynamiting the surviving fish in the bay, and its evenings end with ragged bursts of gunfire.

According to Ruzhdi Alushi, manager of the Gloria beachfront restaurant, some of the weapons have been used to settle scores, but most of the gunfire is "coversational".

"People just shoot in the air to remind criminals that their property is guarded," he said.

He made his money ferrying illegal migrants across to Italy. "There is no profit without risk," he pointed out.

Leonardo, a 24-year-old who was his only other customer, claims to have made more than £100,000 trafficking in cocaine in Zurich before being deported in 1994.

Smuggling people and drugs have made Vlore rich by Albania's modest standards, but the illicit cash also left the town vulnerable to the savings scams.

Both Leonardo and Mr Alushi invested their fortunes, and swear there will be war unless they get their money back.

Mr Shyti — who also lost his savings — insists that he could not disarm the populace if he wanted to. He advises the Italian and Greek troops who will be based in Vlore from todaythat it would be better not to try.

"We welcome this force as long as it sticks to its mission, to distribute humanitarian aid, and perhaps help guarantee free and democratic elections," he said.

"I'm sure the people will give the weapons back after free elections."

There is bitterness in Vlore after a boat carrying refugees was sunk in a collision with an Italian naval vessel on March 28. Up to 100 people are feared to have drowned.

When the committee finally appeared before a 1,000-strong crowd in Vlore's dusty central square yesterday, there was very little to say.

Mr Shyti hoped there would be no "accidents" when the foreign troops arrived. Then it was time for the poems. One began "Where is the heart of the Italian navy?" and ended "Our pain has become fury and hate." The crowd roared its agreement. Vlore is not going to be easy to tame.

News in brief

Iranian extremists threaten suicide attacks in Germany

THE leader of a hardline pressure group warned yesterday that he would unleash suicide bombings against Germany if it did not apologise for a German court ruling which blamed Iran's leadership for the political assassination of Kurdish leaders in Berlin in 1992.

"We will confront insults to Islam and our religious leadership wherever in the world they occur. We are even ready to strap a bomb around our waists and go for martyrdom," said Hossein Allah-Karam, head of the extremist Ansar'e Hizbullah group.

Ansar'e Hizbullah is not believed to have the power or means to carry out such threats. But while Mr Allah-Karam addressed a demonstration outside the German embassy in Tehran, several people signed up to become suicide bombers.

He claimed that hundreds of others had already volunteered. "Right now our government won't allow such actions, but we are negotiating with it, he said. — AP.

'60 dead' after Uganda battle

Uganda claimed yesterday that its army had killed 60 soldiers and captured 114 others during an operation to counter a joint attack on Monday by the Sudanese army and rebels from the Lord's Resistance Army.

The attack took place at Lelabur on the border with south Sudan. — Reuter.

In the hot seat

Tony Abbott, Britain's consul-general in Perth, Australia, is to become the new governor of Montserrat. Mr Abbott will take over from Frank Savage, who leaves the Caribbean island — partly deserted because of a smouldering volcano — in September. — AP.

Rioters killed

About 20 inmates of a labour camp in northern Tajikistan were killed on Thursday when security forces stormed the camp to put down a riot, a senior regional official said yesterday. — Reuter.

Serb set free

A Swiss military court acquitted a Bosnian Serb war crimes suspect yesterday and awarded him £40,000 compensation. The court said key witnesses claiming to have identified Goran Grabez as a guard at the notorious Omarska camp were unreliable. — AP.

Yemenis arrested

Police have arrested 27 members of opposition parties boycotting Yemen's forthcoming parliamentary elections. An Aden-based group monitoring the April 27 polls said the arrests revealed "the Yemeni regime's ugly face" — AP.

Killers sentenced

A South Korean court yesterday sentenced a Chinese sailor to death and five others to life imprisonment for murdering 11 of their shipmates on a tuna boat and throwing their bodies overboard.

Dead mother in bus boot

A PERUVIAN woman put her dead mother in the luggage compartment of a passenger bus hoping to take her back to her birthplace for burial.

Before boarding the bus for the bumpy 200 mile ride from the capital Lima to the jungle town of Jauja, Matilde Cano, aged 50 years, wrapped her mother in blankets and stuffed the body below.

The bundle was spotted during a routine police search for drugs. — Reuter

Israel takes sides in Netanyahu crisis

Israeli team split on filing charge

Shyam Bhatia in Jerusalem

ISRAEL'S state prosecutor said yesterday that she did not think the prime minister, Binyamin Netanyahu, would be required to answer more questions by police, who had recommended that he be indicted for fraud and breach of trust in an influence-peddling scandal.

Edna Arbel's statement was being interpreted as a hint that she herself is not in favour of filing charges against the prime minister.

The daily Ha'aretz newspaper said yesterday that the prosecution team led by Ms Arbel was split down the middle. A decision by the team could well be announced this weekend.

"The dispute is over the most basic question of whether there is enough evidence for a charge sheet against the prime minister," Ha'aretz reported. "The police recommendation is based on the testimony of only one central witness."

The political scandal focuses on the short and controversial appointment in January of a Likud party veteran, Roni Bar-On, as attorney-general. It is alleged that Mr Bar-On was put in place to facilitate a plea bargain by the leader of the Shas Party in Mr Netanyahu's coalition, Aryeh Deri, who is on trial on corruption charges.

After a 12-week inquiry, the police recommended that charges should be filed against Mr Netanyahu, his political aide Avigdor Lieberman, the justice minister Tsachi Hanegbi, and Mr Deri.

Public opinion polls published yesterday suggested a majority of those asked believe Mr Netanyahu should resign only if he is indicted.

The Dhaf poll, published in the Yedioth Ahronot newspaper, said 52 per cent of those questioned want the prime minister to step down only if he is convicted in court. Another 25 per cent say he should suspend himself, pending the outcome of judicial proceedings.

Although Mr Netanyahu says he intends to remain in office, there are clear signs that he is losing the support of cabinet colleagues and political allies.

Avigdor Kahalani, the police minister and leader of the Third Way Party, said the government could not continue functioning if Mr Netanyahu were charged.

At least five other ministers have refused to back him publicly. They include Limor Livnat, the communications minister, and Dan Meridor, the finance minister.

If Mr Netanyahu manages to retain power, they will be the most vulnerable in any reshuffle.

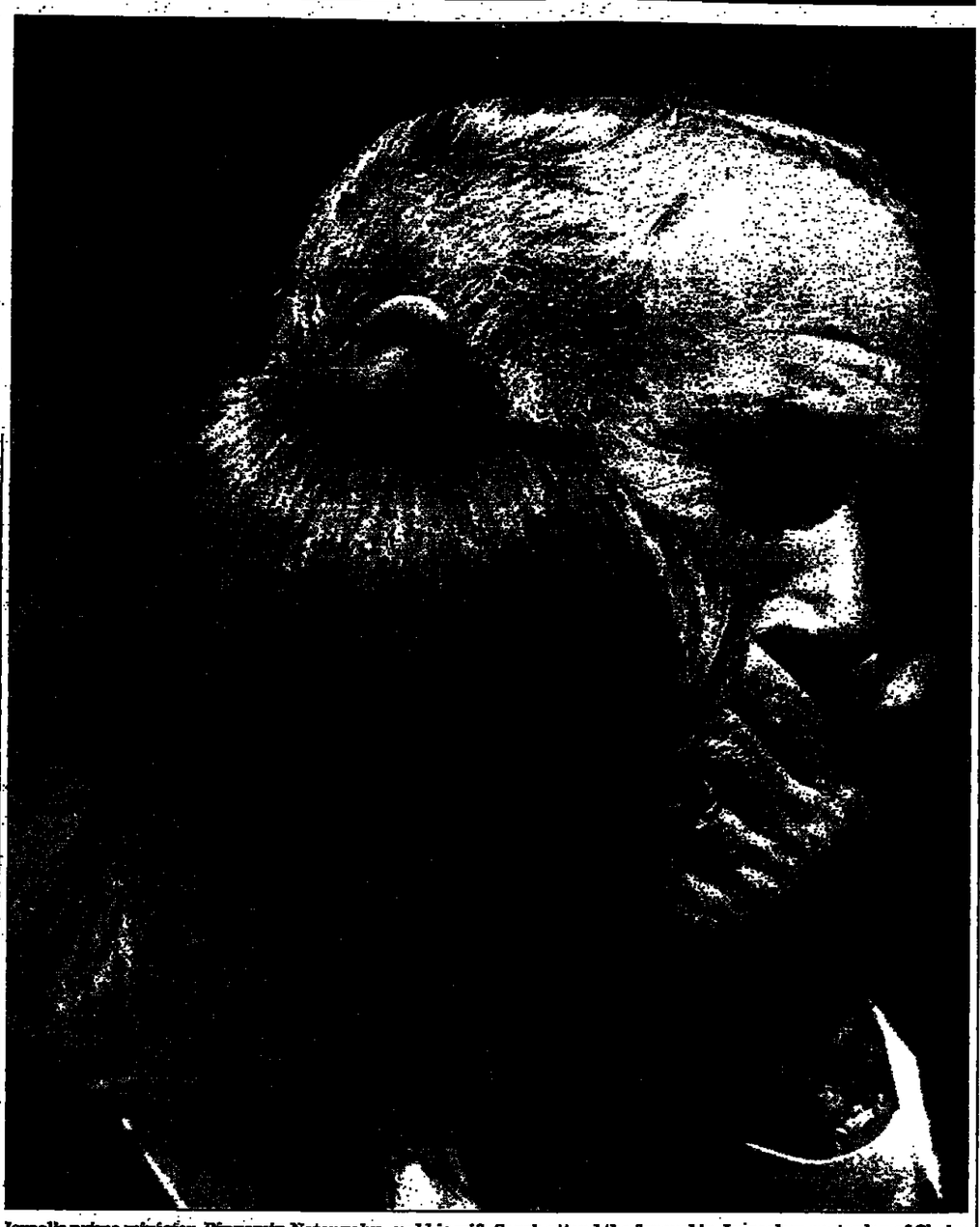
So far only three ministers have publicly stood by Mr Netanyahu: Yitzhak Mordechai, the defence minister; Yehoshua Matza, the health minister; and Yitzhak Levi, the transport minister.

"I want to strengthen the hand of the prime minister," Mr Mordechai told Likud party supporters on Thursday. "In a short time it will be clear to all of us, and the stumbling blocks will be behind us."

In an interview with Israel Radio, he added: "I support the prime minister continuing to run the state because that is the most important thing right now."

Mr Levi, who expressed his "unreserved" belief in Mr Netanyahu's innocence, said: "It is unthinkable that the prime minister be pronounced guilty before the attorney-general even gets to decide if he will be put on trial at all."

Martin Woollacott, page 9



Israel's prime minister, Binyamin Natanyahu, and his wife Sarah attend the funeral in Jerusalem yesterday of Chaim Herzog, the former president PHOTOGRAPH: NATI HARNIK

Zimbabwe cabinet 'looted pensions'

Andrew Meldrum in Harare

ZIMBABWEAN cabinet members are accused of looting a huge fund meant to compensate war veterans, a scandal that has come to a head just as the country marks its 17th anniversary of independence.

Many cabinet ministers, MPs and others closely connected to President Robert Mugabe's ruling Zanu-PF party have claimed more than half the £22.5 million War Veterans Compensation Fund, according to allegations in parliament and reports in the independent press.

The government has drafted a bill to create another fund, this one to pay political detainees from the Rhodesian era. It is widely seen as another slush fund to reward those close to the ruling party.

"We should be celebrating our independence and the end of white minority rule, but our people are asking themselves why our leaders are enriching themselves shamelessly while most of the real war veterans are living in abject poverty," said Margaret Dongo, an independent MP who fought in the 1970s war to end white rule in what was then Rhodesia. "This is Zimbabwe's worst scandal."

Mrs Dongo, one of three independent MPs in the 150-seat parliament, called for an audit of the veterans' fund, but her move was quashed by Zanu-PF loyalists. She managed to enter in the record a list of 46 senior government figures who she said had received large payments from the fund.

She alleged that cabinet ministers and President Mugabe's brother-in-law had each received payments of Z$850,000 (£46,000).

"There are so many cabinet members, army officers and police officers who are claiming funds for serious disabilities, it is a wonder the government can function at all," Mrs Dongo told parliament this week.

The government has announced that it will investigate disbursements, but has declined to list recipients of payments from the fund.

> 'The people who lost limbs, suffered and fought for this country have not received a penny'

So widespread is disgust at the alleged misuse of the veterans' fund that the government's Herald newspaper dealt with the scandal on the front page of its independence edition yesterday. It said more than 70,000 people had applied for funds, although only 35,000 fighters against Rhodesian rule were registered at independence in 1980.

Some of those who applied for compensation were 23 years old, which would have made them six years old at independence.

The social services minister, Florence Chitauro, who is responsible for administering the fund, admitted she did not know who had received payments.

The scandal has divided the ruling party. Irene Zindi MP, another war veteran, alleged in parliament that the main beneficiaries of the fund were "comrades who were having a good time in Europe and the Americas".

"The real people who lost limbs, suffered in silence and fought for this country have not received a penny."

The leading weekly paper, the Zimbabwe Independent, declared: "Yesterday's heroes become tomorrow's villains." In its editorial the paper said: "The personal interests of the political ruling class have come to stand between promises made at independence and the wishes of the people."

The veterans' fund is the biggest scandal of several preoccupying Zimbabwe.

The government has for two years frustrated attempts by the country's most successful black businessman, Strive Masiyiwa, to set up a cellular phone network. Recently it awarded the licence to an American firm represented by a group of Zanu-PF supporters including the president's nephew Leo Mugabe.

The £50 million contract to build a new international airport in Harare went to a little-known Cypriot firm also represented by Leo Mugabe.

Angry Zaireans block aid

Matthew Bigg in Kisangani

THE day after South Africa announced an agreement in principle for talks between President Mobutu Sese Seko of Zaire and the rebel leader Laurent Kabila, Mr Kabila said he had nothing of the sort in mind.

"The South African initiative is about transfer of power," he said. "When he is ready for this, I shall go and attend a short day's ceremony on the peaceful transfer of power.

"There will be no protracted negotiations with Mobutu — never, never. Maybe we have been misunderstood. The issue is about transfer of power, otherwise we march on to Kinshasa."

Yesterday hundreds of angry Zaireans stopped aid workers reaching camps for 80,000 Rwandan Hutu refugees and the United Nations refugee agency, UNHCR, suspended its operations.

Tension was whipped up by aggressive local radio broadcasts about the refugees and unconfirmed reports that they had killed a rebel, or several local Zaireans. Aid workers said they suspected the rebel alliance was inciting trouble to prevent the UN airlifting about 100,000 Rwandan refugees via Kisangani.

The demonstrators prevented an aid convoy leaving a ferry on the Congo river, attacked vehicles and threatened aid workers in protest at the aid the refugees are receiving.

Yenga Masomboye, a boat operator, said: "The Zairean population refuses to let the whites take food to the refugees because the refugees are killing local Zaireans."

A spokeswoman for the UN World Food Programme (WFP) said: "We have been feeding both Zairean internally displaced and some members of the local population for months." — Reuter.

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The election springs to life

Major's loss is Blair's gain

IF THIS were a New Labour press release rather than a Guardian editorial, it would probably start with some contrived line about Twelve More Days To Go — Prepare for Major's Dirty Dozen. For this is where the election comes alive, with the Conservatives beginning to confront the possibility of defeat, and Labour starting to accept that the people of Britain may be about to give them their votes in order to change the country. But since this is a Guardian editorial, we will simply say that the election has at last begun to define the choice which the country faces on May 1.

Two things, not twelve, mark the change in the temperature. The first is a brilliant but disgraceful Conservative advert attacking Tony Blair and Helmut Kohl; the other is a brilliant and rather important Labour speech. The advert first. Only the Conservatives could have thought that the best way to consolidate John Major's heroically embattled midweek performance on Europe was to transform a briefly serious argument into a lying and xenophobic advertising campaign. The fact that they chose this course explains why Mr Major's party is incapable of conducting European policy any longer.

However serious the issues facing Britain and the European Union in the Amsterdam summit and beyond, they will not be solved to our advantage by poking fun at Helmut Kohl. Were it not for the absence of a horned helmet, the Conservative poster would be blood brother to the disgraceful tabloid abuse of the Germans during Euro '96 last summer. That was the Daily Mirror misreading the mood of the nation. No one expects the Mirror to speak for Britain. This was the Conservative Party playing the anti-German card. The only people in British politics who used to do this were semi-crazed Empire Loyalists and batty obsessives of far-right English nationalist cliques.

It is shocking and disgraceful not just because it is rude about the Germans, but because it shows the extent to which Conservative European policy has now become debased. Chancellor Kohl is not going to be impressed with this sort of puerile stuff. He believes he is embarked on the creation of a Europe without war and famine. He is not going to care two hoots about a government whose inability to do anything but rant and posture provokes only condescension and eventually impatience.

But if Mr Major's party has squandered an opportunity by giving way to its baser instincts, there are also signs that Mr Blair has at last begun to appeal more surely to his party's better ones. The difference between the Blair of the first weeks of the campaign and the Blair who spoke so effectively in Edinburgh on Thursday night was enormous and gratifying. Until Edinburgh, the Labour leader had allowed himself to be a packaged, cautious campaigner, overly deferential towards his managers and too willing to appease the philosophy and the beneficiaries of the Thatcher revolution. The Blair who let rip in Edinburgh with a passionate display of committed oratory was a Blair for whom we have waited much too long. It may not have been Old Labour, but it was certainly old-time political electioneering, substantial and committed, the kind of speech many disillusioned Labourites had given up hope of hearing from a leader who seemed to be happier knocking supporters than galvanising them.

It was only a single speech and in the elaborate hall of mirrors of modern election campaigning, even slipping the leash can be a contrived action. But there is, at last, a sense that the two men who aspire to be prime minister after May 1 have finally got serious rather than trivial, that the differences between them are beginning to be more sharply etched than the similarities and that, not a moment too soon, the election is hardening into a contest worthy of our times.

Island in the shade

Britain must pay its colonial debt

THE ISLAND of St Helena is the authentic small speck in the ocean, but that does not diminish the reality of its difficulties. Islanders complain of neglect by Whitehall, autocratic rule by governor, insufficient investment to make the island more accessible, and restrictions on living in Britain. This week the Foreign Office dismissed a recent incident when the island's only police van was set on fire as a "drink-related" event. A year ago there was consternation when demonstrators against the low rate of benefit for unemployment "grabbed Governor Smallman by the tie." This week the Governor refused to ratify the appointment of a popular local figure on the grounds he had been one of the tie-grabbers. Mr Smallman has hardly improved matters by promptly boarding St Helena's only commercial boat, and sailing away for a scheduled holiday — not quite the spirit of the old colonial service where chaps stuck it out.

The "Saints" look askance at British economic aid to the Falklands Islands — five time higher per capita than the figure for St Helena — and ask whether it would take a war for Whitehall to become interested. The British government protests that it does wish to develop tourism and local industry. Some local residents may themselves hold up development by objecting to proposals which would diminish the island's peace and quiet. But little effort seems to have been made in London to tackle these problems. Islanders were making the same complaints about lack of investment, and Britain was refusing the same demand to build an airstrip on the island, in the early 1980s. Thirty years ago a British minister described the exploitation of labour in St Helena's flax mills as "a microcosm of Victorian imperialism." That is no longer so — if only because the flax mills have closed down. But the islanders suffer from 18 per cent unemployment. Britain has done very well out of its empire over the centuries: it should make better provision for one of its remaining colonial subjects

St Helena's complaints over immigration restrictions to the UK also date back to the early 1980s. They are caught in the same net cast over Hong Kongers against whom the legislation was primarily directed. It would be invidious now to grant St Helena the right of abode just when most people in Hong Kong are being handed back to China without a similar option. But it would also be reasonable to allow extended residence in Britain to all who want to make the long journey from the southern Atlantic Ocean.

Letters to the Editor

Hamilton: how to limit the damage

IN recommending that Martin Bell sets up an independent commission against corruption, Geoffrey Robertson (Commentary, April 17) fails to highlight the damage already done. The 1996 Defamation Act allows an MP to waive parliamentary privilege and sue for libel. Neil Hamilton's first failed attempt to sue the Guardian resulted in this change to the law. It will prove a step in the wrong direction.

Parliamentary privilege enshrined in Article IX of the 1688 settlement ensured that an MP could speak his mind and that there could be full and frank debate in society on discussions in the House. When that privilege can be waived, media criticism of MPs will have to become more circumspect. Freedom to criticise MPs may in future turn on estimating how likely they are to sue.

Shouldn't we be campaigning for an American-style public-figure defence (based on the Sullivan case)? Such a defence would prevent public figures suing for defamation. Full and frank discussion in society would then allow the reputations of Hamilton and others to rise or fall accordingly.

Daniel Lloyd.
Freedom and Law.
48 Trinder Road,
London N19 4QU.

IT seems incomprehensible, if what has been made public is true about Neil Hamilton's various business transactions while an MP, that he should have persisted in seeking re-election; why his constituency association should have selected him; and why the Conservative Party leadership should have endorsed what has happened.

I am *not* now referring to the argument about "cash for questions", which I quite agree is really *sub-judice*, and no one should be found guilty until convicted.

It appears that there is ample evidence, which Mr Hamilton has admitted is correct, of a whole series of improper acts incompatible with his parliamentary obligations, including taking secret financial commissions from sources other than Mr Al Fayed, not declaring them on the Commons Register, nor to ministers, and not declaring them for tax purposes.

He also apparently admits having accepted free hospitality abroad without registering it on at least three occasions, and he has taken payments while promoting US Tobacco and the National Nuclear Corporation in Parliament. He has also confessed to seeking indulgence in tax evasion in regard to incorrectly reporting his business income.

Sir Frederic Bennett.
Plas Cwmllecoediog,
Aberangell, Nr Machynlleth,
Powys SY20 9QP.

I MUST take issue with Geoffrey Robertson's dismissal of libel costs as an issue in cases such as Neil Hamilton's. Libel costs have a debilitating effect on anybody but the wealthy.

I, as one of the publishers of LM magazine, am one of the people named in ITN's writ against LM. From my experience, libel law is without doubt Rich Man's Law. Despite a Court of Appeal ruling over a year ago, which is likely to result in smaller amounts paid out in damages, legal costs are still astronomical. It has been estimated that McDonalds has spent an average of £6,500 a day on the McLibel case. Plus, legal aid is unavailable for defamation.

Robertson states that if "their cause is just, they will win back most of their costs". Libel law has far less to do with justice than with who can afford the best barristers.

Helene Guldberg.
Director, InformInc (LM) Ltd.
27 Old Gloucester Street,
London WC1N 3XX.

Beware: it could be you

CERTAINLY the voluntary-agency winners from the lottery feel good, but you never remark on the after-effects on the losers (The lottery's improving lot, Leader, April 15). I write with first-hand knowledge of the consequences of funding-by-lottery in the Toxteth area. One small charity, anxious to fill in the demanding application form correctly, engaged a consultant to do the job — at a fee of £2,000. Its application was rejected, leaving it disheartened and with a debt that it has no hope of paying.

Another case is that of a voluntary training-for-jobs scheme which was a leading member in a community "partnership" project of value to the whole neighbourhood. The approval of a very large grant was wonderful news for the scheme but saddles it with a massive effort to secure matching funds, which distracts it from the job it exists to do. The community partnership scheme is, of course, thrown completely off balance and may well collapse.

I beg that you send your reporter to discover what the real outcome of the system of government-by-lottery is for those on the receiving end. There is a total lack of any systematic monitoring of those to whom grants are given, or to the fate of the losers. I know of one charity which is overcome by the magnitude of its new wealth and simply keeps it in the bank. It is commonly said that agencies can do what they like with their award because nobody will ever bother to come asking awkward questions.

Margaret Simey.
Department of Sociology,
University of Liverpool,
3 Blackburne Terrace,
Liverpool L8 7PJ.

WHILE your Leader is right to say that the National Lottery Charities Board targets its grants at those at most disadvantage, you overlook our policy which ensures fair distribution of our grants to all parts of the country. England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland are allocated budgets based on their population weighted by deprivation indices. Within England we then divide the budget further and allocate money to the nine regions on the basis of population and deprivation, thereby avoiding any possibility that our grants favour any particular part of the country.

Janet Paraskeva.
Director, National Lottery Charities Board (England).
3rd Floor, Readson House,
96-98 Regent Road,
Leicester LE1 7DZ.

THE authors of the National Lottery Yearbook are correct to praise the National Lottery Charities Board's efforts to ensure a more even spread of lottery grants ('London bias' in lottery aid, April 15). But there is still a long way to go in ensuring that charities and voluntary organisations across the country are able to benefit equally from lottery cash.

The system of regulations surrounding the distribution of lottery grants is too slow, with only 8.5 per cent of the £1.5 billion awarded to projects actually having been paid out by the five boards. Research by NCVO, as well as by the NGO Finance/Barclays Global Charities Top 10 Index, indicates that the lottery has had an impact on donations to charity from the general public. Many charities have benefited from the arrival of the lottery, but thousands more have yet to do so. Over half of the applications to the five lottery distribution boards are from charities, with the charities board receiving four times as many as all the others put together.

The long-term issue is whether there can be further localisation of the distribution mechanisms, to help speed up distribution and ensure grants get through to the lower bids. A key means of achieving this would be the creation and funding of "community chests", which would be based on genuine local partnerships of public, private and charitable representatives. These bodies could act both as funders and as funding magnets to help unlock other sources of funding from the community.

Stuart Etherington.
Chief Executive,
National Council for Voluntary Organisations.
Regent's Wharf,
8 All Saints Street,
London N1 9RL.

It's more Enid Blyton fiction

I REFER to Penelope Smith's letter (April 15) in which she describes her life at Green Hedges and her friendship with Enid Blyton over 20 years. In fact, I think Penelope misleads us.

As Enid Blyton's younger daughter, I remember Penelope coming to play with my sister Gillian in the early 1940s, as I mention in my book A Childhood At Green Hedges. However, I do not remember her ever staying in the house, or "playing noisy and hilarious games with [Enid Blyton] in the evenings", as she claims. In fact, she really did not enter the life of the family, such as it was, at all although I am aware that she was close to Gillian.

In case my memory was at fault, I spoke to two people who were important members of the staff at Green Hedges, covering between them almost the entire 20 years Penelope described. Both say that they are certain that Penelope did not stay in the house and both remember her simply as a friend who exchanged daytime visits with Gillian and went with her to Girl Guides.

Since very few people did stay in the house, or become involved with the family, it would have been quite memorable if she had the close association she claims.

In 1974 Penelope wrote another letter about my family, this was to Barbara Stoney, Enid Blyton's biographer. In that letter also she made unreal claims about her place in the family, but in contrast to the current letter, which paints Green Hedges as an almost idyllic place, this earlier letter makes it sound pretty grim.

In fact, neither description is recognisable to me, and I would suggest that both owe more to the imagination than to real experience.

Imogen Smallwood.
98 Bonneville Gardens,
London SW4 9LE.

Smoking out the truth about cigarettes

WITH a market decline of 40 per cent in cigarette sales through the last 20 years, quite where 300 new consumers a day would be coming from (Leader, April 18) is a mystery to us.

Advertising cannot assist in recruiting new smokers and two examples will illustrate how true that is. Cigarette advertising came off television in 1964, after which the industry spend on advertising plummeted. As the spend went down, demand soared, reaching a peak in 1973. And in Hong Kong, where tobacco advertising is absolutely unmissable, the incidence and prevalence of teenage smoking is one of the lowest in the world.

Tobacco advertising has no relationship with total demand. It is all about brand loyalty and brand switching.

In addition, you write that wherever a tobacco advertising ban has been introduced, consumption has fallen. This is simply not true, particularly in Norway where, despite no domestic tobacco advertising having been seen for generations, more young people are smoking than ever before. In other countries imposing bans, consumption may have officially fallen, but it has been because of recession, smuggling problems, or increased taxation.

Clive Turner.
Executive Director,
Tobacco Manufacturers' Association.
55 Tufton Street,
London SW1P 3QF.

THERE appears to be a general assumption that people who started smoking after health warnings appeared on packets do not merit compensation, presumably on the basis that recent smokers had full knowledge and free choice in the matter ($300bn offer in tobacco wars, April 17).

This ignores the fact that Liggett also admitted that cigarettes are addictive but no warnings have ever appeared on packets to this effect. Once addicted a smoker loses his ability to make a free choice because of the intense craving when he tries to stop.

In addition, most of today's smokers began in their teens, or even earlier when they were too young to make an informed choice. By the time they were old enough to do this, they were already addicted and unable to do so.

Ray Donnelly.
Chairman, The Roy Castle Cause For Hope Foundation.
100 Old Hall Street,
Liverpool L3 9TA.

Unhealthy mix

PATIENTS supported by our charities see clear evidence of growing inequities in funding by health purchasers across the NHS for people with similar needs. These are particularly stark in the purchasing of new drug treatments.

Though the impact of ill-health and disability is identical wherever people live, availability is all too often dictated by geography. NHS guidelines which should reinforce consistent access are being widely disregarded.

We believe the present lottery of care is totally unacceptable. We are calling on politicians of all parties to conduct an open debate on whether the NHS is to remain a universal and comprehensive service, and to make a commitment to monitor urgently the availability of treatments.

While there must be limits on NHS resources, arbitrary rationing is not the way to manage them.

Harry Cayton,
Alzheimer's Disease Society.
Peter Gardy,
Multiple Sclerosis Society.
Melinda Letts,
National Asthma Campaign.
Leslie Hout,
National Kidney Foundation.
Nick Partridge,
Terrence Higgins Trust.
And four others.
c/o 25 Effie Road,
London SW6 1EE.

Party faithful

NOTICE your paper was listing me as a "rebel" and a Eurosceptic (Rebels' seven-year march, April 17). This is not the case. I am 100 per cent behind the party line. The only mention I have made of Europe in my election literature is to say that I am totally against the formation of a federal Europe but I am very much "wait and see" on the euro currency.

As a businessman I can appreciate the advantages and, as a politician, I recognise people's concerns.

Sir Graham Bright.
18b Leagrave Road,
Luton, Beds LU4 8HZ.

TV choice

YOUR knowledge of Irish TV viewers' tastes seems patchy (Cable firms rout Irish TV cowboys, April 14).

Ireland is a mature and highly competitive multi-channel market in which over 70 per cent of homes can receive at least seven channels, including four British terrestrial channels. The Nielson ratings for multi-channel homes in Ireland would show that RTE's programming attracts a 45 per cent share against less than 40 per cent for the combined services of the BBC, ITV and Channel 4.

This is hardly the performance of a broadcaster providing what you describe as a "diet of dull programming", and the fact that the "deflector" clients would wish to retain the range of choice they have had for many years is not a rejection of RTE's services.

Conor Sexton.
Managing Director,
RTE Commercial Enterprises.
Donnybrook,
Dublin 4, Ireland.

We do not publish letters where only an e-mail address is supplied; please give a full postal address. We may edit them: shorter ones are preferred

Casualties in a secret trade war

THE scenario predicted by George Monbiot, in which international treaties give unaccountable bodies primacy over elected governments (A charter to let loose the multinationals, April 15), is already taking place at a European level. The European Commission has recently backtracked on two key pieces of animal-welfare legislation, despite the fact that they have passed through the EU's own legislative process.

The Leghold Trap Regulation provides for a ban on the import of furs from countries still using leghold traps, which are illegal within the EU. The regulation has still not been implemented for fear of a Gatt challenge by the US.

The Commission has failed to move towards the implementation of a ban on the marketing of cosmetics tested on animals, provided for under the Cosmetics Directive, for similar reasons. Both the cosmetics industry and the technical committee advising the Commission were ready to accept a limited ban on the testing of finished products from January 1998, but even such a modest step was felt to be vulnerable to a challenge under Gatt and has therefore been blocked.

Cindy Milburn.
UK Director, International Fund for Animal Welfare.
Warren Court, Park Road,
Crowborough TN6 2GA.

OXFAM'S work with poor people in export-processing zones in developing countries such as Mexico and the Dominican Republic has shown us the damage which unregulated foreign investment can cause when working conditions are atrocious and environmental standards are ignored.

Like George Monbiot, Oxfam is deeply concerned at the lack of transparency and debate surrounding negotiations on the Multinational Agreement on Investment (MAI). We invite other voluntary, consumer and trade-union organisations to put the MAI at the top of their agendas. The one-year delay in concluding the agreement gives all of us a chance to ask the next UK government and the OECD to open up the process to consultation.

David Bryer.
Director, Oxfam.
274 Banbury Road,
Oxford OX2 7DZ.

A Country Diary

MACHYNLLETH: Chiffchaffs and willow warblers were singing in the leafing birches and the year's first redstart showed himself beautifully on a hawthorn spray as we walked past the ruins of the old slate quarry. Decades have passed since this moorland quarry closed, and what was an industrial scar has healed as the huge heaps of waste slate have been partly clothed with trees. From up there we came down into the deep, narrow valley called Nant Gwernol, at whose foot is Abergynolwyn, the village where the quarrymen lived. From Abergynolwyn to Tywyn on the coast seven miles away ran a narrow gauge railway, which amazingly is still in service, carrying these days not slate but holidaymakers. It is a delightful line that ends in the hills, its final station deep in the gorge, a place loud with the voice of the Gwernol stream thundering down cataracts and waterfalls, where sheets of mosses and filmy-ferns are perennially green in a world of moisture and shade. Along the eastern side of the valley is a steep wood of oak and hazel, shading violets, primroses, golden saxifrage, wood sorrel and many other plants. Next month parts of the wood will be coloured with carpets of bluebells, and white with the flowers of wild garlic. But though the valley, with its paths and footbridges, is a walkers' paradise, a question mark hangs over it because its oakwood, not protected by any conservation body, is up for sale. The hope is that the Woodland Trust will be able to raise enough money to save it from all threat of exploitation. So if you feel moved to help to keep the philistines away, please send a donation to the Woodland Trust, Autumn Park, Dysart Road, Grantham, Lincs NG31 6LL.

WILLIAM CONDRY

A safety tax on the seriously solvent

Mark Lawson

MICHAEL Green, the head of Carlton Communications, is a somewhat controversial figure in the media world. Accordingly, the news of the frightening attack outside his home on Tuesday evening, which led to the tycoon requiring stitches, was not perhaps at first received with the gravity it deserved. One television executive joked that the assailants were obviously disgruntled viewers of Carlton TV. Another commented that it made a change from Green stitching up other people.

However, with speculation that gangs of burglars are deliberately targeting the high-profile rich — trailing expensive cars home from glittering locations — the Green story becomes very serious indeed, at least to the exceptionally solvent. Having seen off socialism, the British rich now apparently face the violent and criminal redistribution of wealth. Despite the acceptance by all electable British politicians of the low-tax regime favoured by the high-income Right, the purchase of heavies and fencing and armour-plated cars to defend their assets is now likely to result in a *de facto* safety tax which may far outweigh their savings from the Inland Revenue in the last decade. In short, London may be heading for the violently assaulted, expensively defended financial divides of Johannesburg or New York.

This development seriously threatens the capital's emerging reputation as an oasis of safety. In recent weeks, newspapers have reported that two Hollywood super-couples — Tom Cruise and Nicole Kidman, and Demi Moore and Bruce Willis — have been house-hunting in London. Madonna has also reportedly checked out schools for her daughter Lourdes. This news has caused a certain smugness in Britain. A Conservative Party newsletter published at the beginning of the election splashed on the front page the Moore-Willis vote of confidence in our capital.

Whereas in New York and Los Angeles it is considered unwise for a celebrity to attempt the school run without a police helicopter overhead and armed private security guards in a chase-car behind, London was considered a place where the famous could take a breath of air in the park without the possibility of it being their last. (An alternative refuge is, apparently, New Zealand, to which some American high-earners now reportedly commute weekly, believing their families safe from kidnap and assault among the sheep.)

The targeting of the metropolitan rich in Britain is not entirely a new phenomenon. For the last few years in London, the Rolex-mugging has become a significant factor in crime figures. In the city's smarter thoroughfares, it is still common to receive a suspicious number of requests for the time. The ancient Timex or discount Swatch remains a sensible precaution. It is also fairly clear that the regular purchasers of Country Life magazine include not only those who hope to buy the grand houses advertised there but also some who intended to turn up without an appointment but with a jemmy and leather gloves.

Such signposts for the criminally minded have proliferated. Publicity about income — the ostentatious identification of the affluent — has become an important part of British culture. Where once newspaper articles religiously quoted the age of all protagonists in stories, these days estimated income and a calculation of house value are routinely included as well. The Sunday Times annual list of the richest 500 people in Britain has become one of the best-publicised and most widely imitated events in the media calendar. And, from the footballer's transfer fees and income to the twice-weekly lottery winners, the celebration of incredible liquidity has become a tabloid standard.

English manners once involved pretending to be poorer than you are; now the fashion is to shout about it. It is a painful irony for Michael Green that Carlton TV has led the trend in this country towards the American lifestyles-of-the-rich-and-famous programming.

Such coverage is well-established. What is new is that these articles may now be attracting readers with a novel and specific interest. Although planned as a piece of American-inspired jaunty journalism to liven up the business coverage, there can be little doubt that the Sunday Times Rich List now serves as a year-planner for Britain's burglars, blackmailers, kidnappers and extortionists. While it is true that some — the naive, new rich — lobby the Sunday Times for inclusion, many others reportedly now threaten injunctions to avoid a listing.

MICHAEL Green has been a staunch Conservative supporter. It may be too much to draw a direct connection between recent government policy and the attack on Michael Green, although the increasingly hysterical publicity about wealth, which is a strong part of post-Thatcherite culture, clearly plays a part. Two of the prevalent ideas of modern times are: 1) If you've got it, flaunt it; and 2) Everyone's got a right to have it. In the targeting of the famous rich, the second concept clashes with the first. To the extent that the assailants of moneyed Londoners had a political ideology, it is likely to have been a kind of entrepreneurism at knifepoint, an ad-hoc pavement National Lottery.

But even if they reject the view that such crime is a by-product of a political culture, the Green incident should certainly cause rich Tories to reflect. A central proposition of rightwingers in the last 18 years has been that it is possible for the prosperous to opt out of society. Cocooned in their private-health schemes, with their children in private schools, the income-tax regime increasingly biased in their favour, they attempted to live in a sheltered community of wealth and privilege. But, although the position of the rich in London is not yet close to that of the wealthy in Johannesburg or New York, it seems increasingly likely that the sheltered community will have to be protected by fences and bodyguards.

The obvious moral is that you can vote but you can't hide. No man, however rich, is an island, unless — as in the case of, for example, the Barclay Brothers — he can go and live on one. Tom and Nicole, Demi and Bruce, Madonna and Lourdes perhaps ought to start contacting real-estate agents in New Zealand.

The men of war who must bring peace

Commentary

Martin Woollacott

ISRAELIS and Palestinians have in common that their lives are ruled to an unusual degree by soldiers, police, and intelligence men. The question now raised, amid the troubles besetting Binyamin Netanyahu, is whether the curiously peaceful logic of the security services will prevail over the dangerously aggressive policies of a leader among whose claims to fame is an alleged expertise on security matters.

In less than a year in office Netanyahu has fallen out with almost everybody with whom it was possible to quarrel. With his own allies in government, with the Israeli labour movement, even with the Israeli business class. With Yasser Arafat, of course, but also with King Hussein, President Mubarak, President Chirac, and President Clinton. But his most fateful confrontation may well turn out to have been with the hard-headed men who run the Israeli security services, whose advice he has now spurned, with disastrous results, on at least three critical occasions. In the past, some of Israel's strategic mistakes were partly the responsibility of soldiers and intelligence men, for example the decision to keep the West Bank after the 1967 victory rather than to trade it for peace treaties with the Arab states. There was a time when the military had an overweening confidence in its abilities, either to defeat Arab attacks or to indefinitely rule, by a mixture of guile and force, a subject Arab population. But that confidence reached its apogee in the Lebanon War, and then in the intifada, from which they emerged with a sad recognition of the limits of the possible.

What the Oslo agreement created, among other things, was a new role for the Israeli security forces and their Palestinian counterparts as guardians of the peace process. What was at issue now was not their capacity to fight one another, but their capacity to control the low-intensity conflict which everyone but the total optimists knew would continue, or, if stilled, would always threaten to break out again, at least for some years.

That involved a continued process of political judgment, judgment of what was tolerable to Arabs and Israelis and what, case by case, would lead to trouble. So, particularly with an administration like that of Netanyahu, it put them in the position of monitoring their own government. Indeed, it put them at the absolute centre of Israeli politics. That is where they clashed with Netanyahu, whose impulse was to to re-establish dominance over the Palestinians, and force them to accept less than even a trammelled state, in less territory than they expected, and without even a handhold in Jerusalem. Whether, on the Palestinian side there has been any similar argument between Arafat and his security chiefs over the wisdom of keeping Hamas in play is not known, but it is possible.

The struggle between Netanyahu and the security state is not one between a hawk and doves. Shin Bet, the military, and the police have not suddenly acquired pacifist convictions. It is between reality and responsibility, on the one hand, and fantasy on the other, for the distinguishing feature of Netanyahu's policies is that he pursues them without any consideration of the costs, and argues for them, to Israelis, as if they had no costs. In part this is just the exasperation of having to point out that if you do *x* then *y* will follow to someone who refuses to accept that acts have consequences.

NETANYAHU habitually represents such consequences as unprovoked acts of hostility, or as a reversion to violence by opponents who said they had renounced it. Without justifying Palestinian violence, Netanyahu's argument ignores the disparity of strength between the two sides. It also ignores the fact that violence has usually followed, not breakdowns in negotiation, but unilateral decisions by the Israeli authorities.

Given this background, it is symbolic that the new threat to Netanyahu, that of being indicted on corruption charges, comes from the police, a part of the security establishment. There is no suggestion that security people are consciously conspiring to bring Netanyahu down. But there is a factor that links Netanyahu's policies on the West Bank and Gaza and the decisions at issue in the corruption investigations. That is lack of judgment, and a readiness to take large risks for unclear purposes. If it is shown that there was a conspiracy to bring in an attorney general who would let one of Netanyahu's political allies off the hook in a corruption trial already in progress, then two things follow. One is that it was an astonishingly inept and amateurish effort that collapsed within hours. The other is that it has created a crisis for the Israeli legal system. Whatever decisions are taken, there are going to be grave consequences, either in the shape of a trial of the prime minister, or, if charges are not brought, then almost certainly in the shape of a lingering scandal unlikely to be easily laid to rest. Even if the prime minister is cleared of breaking the law, the question remains of how he could have contemplated an appointment as weird as that of a little-known Jerusalem lawyer to the highest legal position in the government. The conclusion must be that Netanyahu is a blunderer who inflicts damage on everything and everybody, including himself.

THE opposite view, that he is a shrewd operator who grasps the underlying weakness of the Palestinian and Arab position and will be able to dictate a solution on Israel's terms without paying a serious price in new Arab-Israeli violence, is occasionally but not convincingly argued. Those who take that view saw him as equally shrewd in manoevring around the option of a national government with Labour that emerged recently. Yet the more likely explanation of that possibility is that it is another example of the process of damage limitation that Israeli politics has become under Netanyahu. The key is to contain him, perhaps within a new coalition government, or in some other way. Foremost in that process is the security state which Netanyahu has failed to properly consult or heed. That establishment has its prominent political representatives, for example Yitzhak Mordechai, the present defence minister, and the likely next Labour leader, Ehud Barak, both former generals, and both men, interestingly, with whom the United States cultivates close relations. To the soldiers, policemen and spies falls the task, it seems, not of making war but of preserving peace.

Flirting with Paddy

Martin Kettle

IN the general elections of the 1980s, a common view of the choices on offer — expressed not a million miles away from the leader column of this newspaper among other places — went something like this. We don't want the Conservatives, so the only realistic alternative is to elect a Labour government. But Labour is badly out of touch and also a bit wild, so we'd like to cover our bets and see the Liberal Democrats do well too, to tame their excesses. With a bit of luck and some astute tactical voting, this might produce an outcome which is both attractive and realistic, a hung parliament in which Labour depends on the Liberal Democrats.

It's a sign of how much things have changed that this scenario, favoured in progressive circles for much of the past 15 years and widely canvassed as recently as 1992, now seems both improbable and irrelevant. Indeed as election day 1997 approaches, I don't think I have yet heard anyone proposing it at any stage in the current campaign, even in the Guardian — and there aren't many aspects of the election you can say that about.

It isn't hard to explain why this view should have lost its allure. The answer can be summed up in two words: Tony and Blair. Since Blair became Labour leader, he has destroyed two of the legs on which the old argument stood. First, he removed any taint of wildness from his party and then, as a result, he moved Labour into a commanding position in the opinion polls from which it has not yet been dislodged.

The upshot is that the old argument seems a bit of a nonsense now. If you want to get rid of the Tories, what do you do? You vote Labour. It's that simple. Labour embraces markets. Is rewarded with landslide victory. Tories out on their ear for a generation. Tony in No 10 for a generation. What could be better? Pity about the Lib Dems, but there you are.

But it's not as simple as that, is it? First, because although Blair has kept his side of the bargain, doing everything that reformist opinion had been urging upon Labour for all those years, reformist opinion has not kept its side. Instead of welcoming Blair's Labour with open arms, a lot of left reformists have spurned it. Whether that tells you more about them or about Blair is something I leave to you to decide. But the consequence is that the old argument has been revived today in a different guise. It used to say: "Only Labour can get rid of the Tories, but we'd feel safer with some Liberal Democrats in there too." Now it says: "Only Labour can get rid of the Tories, but we'd feel more enthusiastic with some Liberal Democrats in there too."

It's an odd change. Over the past five years, the Liberal Democrats themselves haven't altered very much politically. Indeed insofar as they have, it has been to move carefully nearer to the fabled centre ground; the higher rate tax pledge has been reined back a bit, the Euro-enthusiasm has become more measured, and there have even been hints that the commitment to proportional representation no longer means single transferable vote or nothing.

And yet, while they have nudged towards the mean, the Liberal Democrats' reputation as the truly radical party in British politics has been transformed. Once again, the reason is Tony Blair. The Labour leader may have doubled his own party's membership, but he has been a good recruiting sergeant for the Liberal Democrats too. As Blair has moved Labour to the centre, Ashdown has suddenly found himself a host of new admirers on the left.

Which brings us to tactical voting. As I say, logic says that tactical voting doesn't matter in 1997 in the way that it did in 1987 or 1992. On the face of the poll figures, Labour seems to have made a real breakthrough and will receive its reward on May 1.

And yet on the left the eagerness for tactical voting is stronger than ever. Ten years ago, some Labour voters began to recognise that they had to swallow their pride and vote Liberal Democrat where it made obvious sense to do so. Even so, many of them seemed to be a bit apologetic about it.

TODAY, I suspect, tactical voting is up and out of the closet. The subjective restraints have all but disappeared, carried away in a fit of enthusiasm on the left for the Liberal Democrats' readiness to campaign for tax for socially necessary purposes, for their defence of the rights of suspects and against the overmighty power of the police, and for the unmistakably decent and rational campaign that they have waged this time around.

What discourages tactical voting for the Liberal Democrats now are the objective, rather than the subjective, reasons. Labour's resurgent poll strength is the most important of these, since it will have pushed Labour up from third place into second in some constituencies targeted by the Liberal Democrats. The other is the awkward fact for Ashdown that his target seats are harder to win than Blair's. To make 20 gains, for example, the Liberal Democrats need a 5 per cent swing; to make the same number of gains, Labour needs a swing of only 1.5 per cent.

And yet my sense of things is that Ashdown should not despair. There are more Labour voters out there than ever before whose willingness to vote Liberal Democrat is a matter not merely of the head but now of the heart as a well.

PHOTOMONTAGE: LIZ COULDWELL

Real women of the real world

For nearly two decades the debate about women's rights has been stuck on the sterile ground of 'post-feminism'. But, writes Sheila Rowbotham, women have continued to organise and network – from the home as well as the workplace

THE media had hardly begun to take feminism seriously when they began to announce it was finished. An American journalist coined the phrase "post-feminism" in the early 1980s, and since then we have been assumed to be either in mourning or grateful for release. Yet because the British media take their cue so much from the US, "girls on top" can still make it into the news, and so can the personal dilemmas of the middle class. It is not the much-vaunted "backlash" against feminism which is the problem — after all, there has been a sustained assault on any shred of liberty and real equality which survives in society at large. It is a more subtle, unstated bias which decides what can be printed. Because readers are now assumed to start yawning at accounts of women who are not part of the élite taking collective action for radical change, media discussion has been thinned down to the recycling of opinion which frequently disdains the touch of actuality.

The result is that debate about women's wants and rights has become stuck in the narrowest of grooves, which excludes the experiences of the great majority; and that the extraordinary movements emerging among poor women in many parts of the world have hardly been noticed. In the late 1990s, there are several women's movements with diverse political aims; some have much less power than others. Women workers in the informal sector, women supporting men on strike, women protesting about prices or demanding social provision and resisting environmental devastation have either been ignored or recorded as a flash in the pan. Yet they have mobilised on a scale far beyond the women's-liberation groups of the 1970s and have created their own networks nationally and internationally. While their starting point has been the basic need to survive, not a desire to be women in new ways, they have frequently found themselves doing and thinking the unimaginable. And it has been amidst adversity and in desperation that they have developed the courage and conviction to challenge that dismal deification of "flexibility" and market forces which has threatened their livelihoods.

An inspirational example has been the Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA) which, led by Ela Bhatt, began organising women in the informal sector in Ahmedabad, India, in the 1970s. By listening and learning about specific grievances, by building up confidence, by winning partial victories and, in the words of its secretary, Renana Jhabvala, "keeping on keeping on", SEWA has grown to well over 200,000 members.

It recruits paper pickers, street vendors, rural workers and homeworkers, mobilising as a union, defending as a friendly society, publicising as a campaign group and creating more democratic kinds of employment as a co-operative.

The SEWA approach has wider relevance, for it indicates ways of associating which have lessons for unions in the West weakened by the growth of low-paid casual jobs. Moreover, Ela Bhatt and Renana Jhabvala have an international vision. From the 1980s, they have consolidated links with trades unions, women's groups and homeworkers' organisations and argued within institutions such as the International Labour Organisation that, instead of laws that regulate the poor from on high, policy should reflect needs voiced by homeworkers themselves. In 1994, HomeNet, an international network for home-based workers, was formed. Its members range from embroiderers in Madeira, unionised for 20 years, to the Self-Employed Women's Union (SEWU) in South Africa which started recruiting poor, non-unionised women in 1994. With help from South African trades unions, SEWU is already networking with other African countries, where unions, hit by structural-adjustment programmes, are turning to unorganised workers in the informal sector.

HOME-BASED workers finally won recognition from the ILO in June 1996, despite bitter employer opposition. The resulting Convention and its recommendations were a significant marker. They demonstrated how notions of who is seen to be a worker and how work is defined have been transformed by new patterns of production. They repudiated the doctrine of profits at any price.

Women vendors organised by SEWA have a slogan: "dignity and daily bread". This combination of aspiration and survival, of well-being and health, still lurks in the old word, livelihood. And a livelihood spans work and home: it is about what you can spend as well as what you earn.

These connections of political economy, obvious because they are lived, are not only well understood in Ahmedabad. From the 1980s, in countries such as Peru, Mexico, Brazil, Nicaragua and South Africa, there have been mass mobilisations of hundreds of thousands of women around prices, rents and basic social needs, schools, health centres and sanitation. The political theorist Sonia Alvarez describes these as "militant motherhood" movements and notes how, when women rebel because they cannot care for their families, they create a new space in the public arena of politics.

When people face an unknown situation, they often look back to get their bearings, mixing something old with something new. In the United States, there is a tradition of "women's auxiliaries" forming in support of strikes because the men's conditions and wages affect the whole family; but women in the Pittston mining dispute of 1988 opted for the more autonomous name, "Daughters of Mother Jones", in memory of a white-haired agitator who defied gun thugs in her 80s early this century.

There is a strength in having a history. The role of women in the British miners' strike of 1984-5 did receive extensive coverage. But this visibility was to be ephemeral, and the organisational continuities have been little remarked. Women Against Pit Closures subsequently helped inspire women in the printers' strike at Wapping and the seafarers' strike. Over the last 18 months, Women Of The Waterfront, formed in the Liverpool docks dispute, has been turning former housewives into public speakers. As Doreen McNally put it at an International Women's Day meeting in Manchester this year: "We've gone from the kitchen to the world platform." She had just got back from a conference of trades unionists in the newly-industrialised countries of the Pacific rim. The new self-confidence she has found is based on a democratic belief in human capacity. "It's with all of us." Like the Daughters of Mother Jones, she says she feels a debt to those who won improvements for the working class in the past, and adds: "We see ourselves as caretakers of the future." Her own family's livelihood has been smashed, leading her to connect to other people who have suffered from the social devastation caused by economic policies which favour low pay, insecurity and welfare cuts.

WOMEN Against Pit Closures and Women Of The Waterfront have insisted that livelihood means more than money, and that we have a responsibility for future generations. It is remarkable how the same feelings of guardianship have galvanised women in very different contexts. In India, the women who hugged trees in the Chipko (literally "cling to") protests against deforestation during the mid-1970s had a similar understanding. During the 1980s, an environmental-justice movement developed in the United States protesting against the toxic dumping concentrated in areas where poor black and native American people live. The resulting miscarriages and birth defects have led women to take desperate measures. Cora Tucker, an African-American campaigner who can remember civil rights and has been active in the welfare rights movement, explains: "We go at it from the point of view of how it affects our children." They have been put down as "hysterical housewives", but she turns the taunt around, insisting that if men are not getting hysterical, there is something wrong with them.

Like other militant mothers, they are not exactly sitting around knitting socks and baking pies. For instance, Dolly Burwell from North Carolina has been in prison many times for protesting against contaminated soil after transformer oil was deliberately leaked down a rural road. Organising locally and thinking globally, Lois Gibbs from Love Canal, one of the first people to resist toxic dumping when her child became ill in the late 1970s, has just set up the Citizens Clearing House for Hazardous Waste to co-ordinate information internationally. They see the environment not as something apart but as "the place where you work, you live, the place you play".

In her recent book on women in these grassroots movements, Crazy For Democracy, the American historian and feminist Temma Kaplan describes Dolly Burwell, Cora Tucker and Lois Gibbs as pathfinders. Because many poor women are facing new and extreme circumstances, some have learned fast and intensely. In seeking new ways through for themselves and their loved ones, they have reached out to others and, in the exchange, understood the urgency of creative collective resistance.

Movements interact, and people carry memories and ideas from one experience of organising to another. But wider communication is also important. These groundfloor pathfinders and their ingenious and innovative livelihood movements deserve greater visibility and consideration. They have been testing out ideas about material survival, social rights, democracy, empowerment and human dignity in hard times. They have a great deal to teach those of us who see feminism as relevant to more than a privileged minority, and indeed anyone concerned about the numbing acceptance of inequality and injustice which has left us with a society and a political system which is so manifestly out of joint.

THIS WEEK'S essayist, Sheila Rowbotham, has been a leading feminist thinker since the 1960s. Educated at St Hilda's College, Oxford, and London University, she is now a research fellow at Manchester University. Her books, which include Women, Resistance And Revolution (1972), and Women In Movement (1993), have helped shape the women's movement. Her latest book, A Century Of Women (Viking/Penguin), is published in June

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Professor George Wald

Unlocking the secret of sight

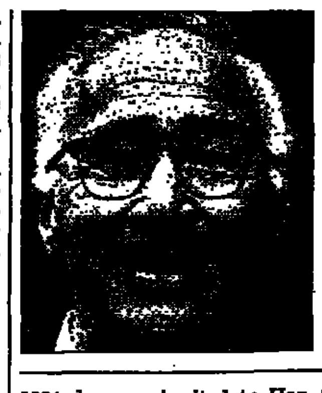
GEORGE Wald, who has died aged 90, was the brilliant American biologist and biochemist who shared a 1967 Nobel Prize for unmasking the biochemical mysteries of sight. Outside the laboratory, he gained initial notoriety and then world respect by opposing the Vietnam war in a 1969 speech at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Wald said that good experimental science is like having a quiet conversation with nature. Each step in a series of experiments is devised to allow nature to speak intelligibly so the scientist has only to listen.

He resolved what had for decades been the central conceptual mystery of the visual process. Hereditary night blindness was known to the ancient Egyptians and, during the first world war night blindness was shown to occur as a consequence of vitamin A deficiency. In Britain, in the 1920s, Tansley had shown that vitamin A-deficient rats produce much less rhodopsin than normal animals, but the biochemical role of vitamin A remained unknown.

This mystery prompted Wald — who gained an American National Research Council fellowship after receiving his Columbia University doctorate in 1932 — to examine the structure and biochemistry of the retina. In 1933, working at Otto Warburg's Berlin laboratory he made the first identification of vitamin A in cells in the retina. He confirmed his discovery with Paul Karrer in Zurich and sought to follow this up in Berlin during a year under Otto Meyerhof at the then world famous Kaiser Wilhelm Institute.

However, under Hitler, anti-Jewish pressure drove Wald back to America, where the second year of his fellowship was spent studying retinal physiology at Chicago. In



At the time of Vietnam, anti-war campaigner Wald declared himself proud to be on President Nixon's enemies list

PHOTOGRAPH: CORBIS-BETTMANN/UPI

1934, he was invited to Harvard, where he remained as a research scientist, biology teacher and eventually professor until his retirement in 1977. He carried forward the difficult, subtle investigation which eventually revealed the role of vitamin A in the creation and cycling of visual purple — rhodopsin.

This is present in the retinal rods, the eye's dim-light receptors. Working with Ruth Hubbard — who in 1955 became his second wife — Wald investigated the functional biochemistry of the two key components of visual purple. These comprise a colourless protein (opsin) and a yellow carotenoid, now called retinal, which is the aldehyde of vitamin A.

Wald showed that when light falls on rhodopsin it splits into the two components, and that the separated retinal is then reduced by an enzyme to vitamin A. This biochemical sequence, which Wald found to be remarkably similar in a wide range of species possessing image forming eyes — mammals, amphibia and marine fishes — is reversed in the dark, forming a cycle. However, the process is chemically inefficient. Without a supply of vitamin A the cycle runs down and low-light sensitivity is lost.

What remained puzzling was that this process, in itself, is too slow to explain the rapidity of light detection and does not produce the kind of energy output needed to trigger a signal in the optical nerve.

Wald went on to investigate and identify the distinct but only slightly different forms of retinal that are sensitive to red, yellow-green and blue light and, working with Ruth Hubbard, showed that the rapid response of the retina to light depends on the almost instantaneous transformation of the shape of the carotenoid component, retinal. Carotenoids have an unparalleled ability to exist either as straight molecules (the *trans* isomers) or in bent and twisted forms (the *cis* isomers). Wald found that, in visual pigment, retinal exists as a *cis* isomer that is so sensitive to light that the energy of a single photon switches it instantly to the *trans* form. It is this change, the release of stored energy by a molecular spring, which triggers the response of the retinal cell.

For this work he received the Lasker Award in 1958, the Rumford Medal of the American Academy in 1959 and, in 1967, a share of the Nobel Prize. He went on to investigate the possibility that the phototropic properties of plants could depend on carotenoid isomer transformation and continued working at Harvard as professor emeritus until a few years ago.

For the last quarter of a century of his life, apart from his articulate opposition to war, Wald became outspoken about the problems of developing countries, was profoundly concerned about the dangers of nuclear power and the proliferation of nuclear weapons, and involved himself in the investigation of abuses of human rights. He served as president of tribunals investigating abuses in El Salvador, Afghanistan, the Philippines, Guatemala and Zaire.

When, at the time of Vietnam, Wald declared himself proud to be on President Nixon's enemies list, he declared a toughness — he grew up in an immigrant quarter of Brookyln — integrity, vision and professional courage which served as a model for generations.

Anthony Tucker

George Wald, scientist, born November 18, 1906; died April 12 1997

Edward Barker

Lines from the underground

EDWARD Barker, who has died aged 46 of heart failure, was the wittiest and most idiosyncratic cartoonist to emerge from the British underground press in the late 1960s and early 1970s. His work was a satire of the dog-days of the era in which he found himself.

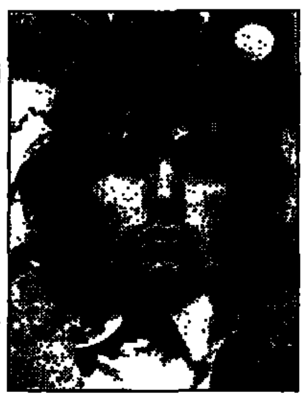
Barker created a world in which flea-bitten hippies exchanged hangover insults with dustmen in the early morning streets, where messed-up, half-dead rock bands lurched from gig to gig, where the the flowery optimism of 1967's Summer of Love had degenerated into scattered dysfunctional bands of squatters using recreational drugs. *Any* recreational drugs.

The fortnightly International Times (IT), founded in London in 1966, was the first and — briefly — Britain's only "alternative" paper. But by 1969 its constituency had the choice of half-a-dozen other publications. It took Barker, together with Mick Farren, to stabilise its circulation and transform IT into a brash, funny and satirical tabloid, a Daily Mirror on hallucinogenics.

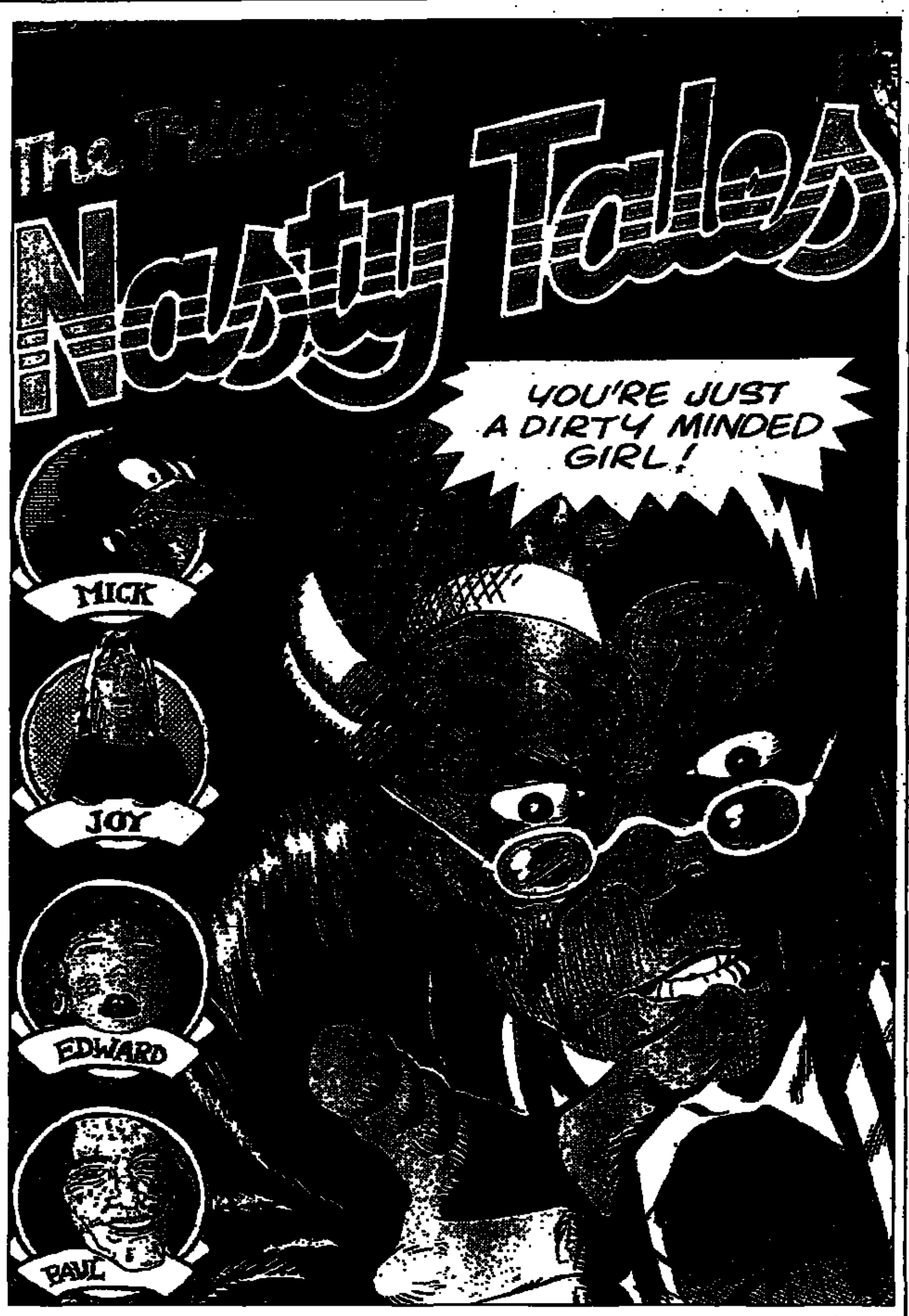
A native of Birmingham, he won a scholarship to Moseley School of Art at the age of 12 and left four years later. He eventually ambled into one of those emblematic institutions of the 1960s, the Birmingham Arts Lab, which offered a mix of the avant-garde of the time.

In 1969 one of the founders of IT, Graham Keen, drove to Birmingham to entice Barker to join the paper's staff.

The work of many of his fellow designers and artists who were first published in IT and its contemporaries like Oz magazine would, within a decade, have flowed into the mainstream media. That was not the case in the late 1960s. But the strength of Barker's line drawing and the accessibility of his humour led to him being summoned to the Observer. There, he recalled, editor David Astor beamed at him encouragingly and said: "I understand you're *funny*." For £10 a week, which was more than his full-time wage at IT, Barker proceeded to introduce the readers of the Observer to the Largactilites, a collection of cone-shaped creatures who did very little and said less.



As I see me . . . Barker and self-caricature (below). He never took himself seriously but his work on the comic book Nasty Tales (right) delivered him trembling to the dock of the Old Bailey



To his astonishment, readers responded with fury. The drug largactil was, they protested, used in the treatment of the mentally ill. Barker — who had been genuinely unfamiliar with largactil's medical function — adroitly changed them into the Galactilites, but his heart had gone out of the drawings. A few weeks later he handed in a four-frame strip which consisted solely of four horizon-lines. It was published — and became the first cartoon to appear in Private Eye's Pseuds Corner — but a few days later the Observer paid him off.

His best work was accomplished within the six years he spent collaborating with his friends in the underground press. As well as IT and Oz, he inhabited those forerunners of the Viz magazine of the 1990s, the comic books Cyclops and Nasty Tales. The latter publication, which Barker co-edited, delivered him trembling to the dock of the Old Bailey on an obscenity charge in 1973. This little-known re-run of the Oz trial resulted in a majority verdict of not guilty. An anthology called *Edward's Heave Comics* — prepared during the 1970-1974 Conservative premiership of Edward Heath, whose portrait adorned the cover — and published by Felix Dennis is now a collector's item.

He handed in a four-frame strip consisting of four horizon-lines. The paper paid him off

In the early 1980s Barker moved to Cornwall. Six years ago a rumour that he had died was widely circulated; he was obliged to respond in the manner of Mark Twain, and a large resurrection party was thrown for him at London's Groucho Club. There he met his future wife Maggie Kayley, with whom he settled in Kent.

His last collection, *A Murder of Crows*, published by his old colleague Richard Adams in 1991, featured those anthropomorphic birds — which he had first adopted as a motif 20 years earlier — in a number of unfortunate circumstances, most of which they confronted with shy dignity.

"Ed Barker has talent oozing out of his pores," wrote Dennis in the booklet's introduction, "and the fact that he is not immensely rich and famous has always been something of a mystery to me."

Humorists are not supposed to be amusing in private. Edward Barker was a riotously funny man. Refusing to take anything seriously, including his own work, his prospects, his misfortunes and illnesses, he was irresistibly good company. He failed to become rich and famous because he was entirely lacking in personal vanity or ambition. Those qualities, as much as his achievements of 25 years ago, sent old friends to his hospital bed over the past fortnight.

Barker considerately provided his own epitaph, which his many admirers should try to obey. At the endpiece of *Edward's Heave Comics* is depicted a tombstone. "Here Lies Edward," is engraved upon it. "Stick No Bills."

Roger Hutchinson

Edward Barker, cartoonist, born May 31, 1950, died April 18, 1997

Ann Craft

Helping to think the unthinkable

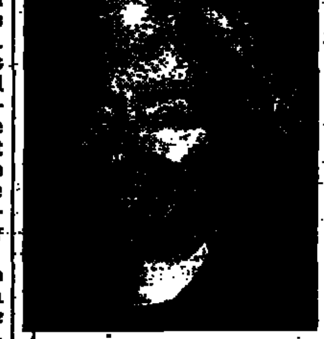
NOWADAYS, the sexual abuse of people with learning difficulties is an accepted, sad fact of life. But when Ann Craft, who has died of cancer aged 53, and her colleague and friend Hilary Brown, organised the first conference on the subject in London in 1988 they were indeed, in the words of the publication that ensued, encouraging people in *Thinking The Unthinkable*.

Their commitment to changing policy in this area ensured that *Thinking The Unthinkable* was swiftly followed by a staff training pack, *Working With The Unthinkable*, and the establishment of Napsac, the national organisation in the field, of which Craft was director.

Sexual abuse was not the only area in which she was a pioneer. After a degree and social work qualification in Swansea and research posts at Bryn y' Neuadd Hospital, she published, with Michael Craft, the classic *Handicapped Married Couples*. This came out long before the acceptance of the idea that those with learning disabilities might wish to enjoy permanent sexual relationships and marriage.

Her promotion of the rights of people with learning difficulties to enjoy appropriate health and sex education and opportunities for personal and sexual relationships established a theme which persisted throughout her career, at Bath and then Nottingham universities. She generated material and initiatives aimed at policymakers, practitioners, carers and people who themselves had learning disabilities.

As a senior lecturer at Nottingham she developed a sex education programme for young people with learning disabilities, and the close



Ann Craft: wicked humour

links she forged with the local Shepherd's School were, said head teacher David Stewart, "a supreme example of the best form of working relationship between the university and the wider community."

Craft's cancer was diagnosed about 18 months ago. Surgery and therapy followed. She relished life. The 10th world congress of the International Association of the Scientific Study of Intellectual Disabilities was scheduled for Finland last July and Craft had it as her goal to be there.

She was, triumphantly convening and chairing symposia, presenting her own papers and enjoying Helsinki and the company of her many international friends to whom she personified all that was seen to be best about British people. She had a faintly hockey-sticks-and-girls'-dorm aura, combined with a fine sense of ethics and a wicked and devastatingly accurate humour particularly directed at pomposity.

Linda Ward

Ann Craft, researcher and writer, born June 5, 1943; died April 13, 1997

Letter: Richie Riley

Gerald Johnson writes: I was saddened to read of the death of my godfather Richie Riley, (*obituary, April 15*) — he was indeed an extraordinary man. My mother Pearl and her brother, Tony, were co-founders of Les Ballets Negres, together with Richie Riley and the company's artistic director, the late Berto Pasuka.

I last saw Richie just over a year ago at a private viewing of some of his work. We had not been in touch, and I was shocked to discover that he had lost both legs. That aside, he seemed hardly to have changed from the awesome and vibrant "Uncle Richie" of my childhood.

When I was about six years old, I had been taken to the premiere of a new ballet in which my mother's character was killed on stage by Richie's frightening witch-doctor. In a tense moment, after a thundering drum roll, a young voice was heard to shriek: "That bugger Riley killed my mommy." Backstage, with the laughter of the audience ringing in my ears, there were hugs and kisses from a giggling Richie Riley, my mother and the rest of the dancers.

Weekend Birthdays

Wish Ruby Wax (44 today) would make the career change she's promised and get behind camera. Or keyboard: the Ruby who wrote about Cannes ("you go there to see where you are in the human food chain") or the Night of the Living Brain-Dead at the Paris fashion shows has a seriously bad attitude to self-crowned celebrity, a Figaro figure laughing at — yet for survival complicit with — the *ancien régime* of the famous. Like all servants of those who consider themselves fated to be fêted, she knows where the truth is: in the bedroom drawers, the bathroom cabinet and the fridge (that horrible secret contemporary repository). Ruby was embraced by Imelda Marcos, whom she considers "on the cusp of evil", because Ruby had been on the cover of Hello! (by the way, Ruby really doesn't read it) and "shot 17 hours of Imelda in all — 10 of those are me doing some serious arse-kissing". When Imelda finally admitted Ruby to the cupboard with the post-Aquino shoe collection, you could see Ruby had reached the core of woman and regime, just as the furnishings of Marie Antoinette's boudoir somehow explain pre-Revolutionary France. Nobody can ever have made better use than Ruby of five RSC seasons playing second wench and third serving-maid . . .

Today's other birthdays: Sue Arrowsmith, professor of law, University of Wales, 35; William Baillie, painter, 74; The Most Rev Luigi Barbarito; Apostolic ProNuncio, 75; Sue Barker, tennis player, sports commentator, 41; Harold (Dickie) Bird, Test umpire, 64; Antonio Carluccio, restaurateur, 60; Adrian Coles, director-general, Building Societies Association, 43; Trevor Francis, football manager, 43; Prof Sir John Horlock, engineer, 69; Margo MacDonald, Scottish Nationalist, broadcaster, 53; Dudley Moore, actor, pianist, 62; Richard Phelps, pentathlete, 36; Paloma Picasso, designer, 48; Alan Price, rock singer, bandleader, 55; Michel Roux, chef de cuisine, 56; Prof Glenn T Seaborg, chemist and educator, 85; Wilf Stevenson, director, British Film Institute, 50.

Tomorrow's birthdays: Angela Christian, jazz singer, guitarist, 49; Sebastian Faulks, author, 44; Nina Foch, actress, 73; Graeme Fowler, cricketer, 40; John Eliot Gardiner, pls choirmaster and conductor of the baroque revival, 54; Andrew Jaspan, managing director and publisher, the Big Issue, 45; Sir Antony Jay, author and scriptwriter, 67; Sir Eddie Kulukundis, impresario, shipowner, 65; Jessica Lange, actress, 48; Nicholas Lyndhurst, actor, 36; Ryan O'Neal, actor, 56; Rodger Pannone, solicitor, 54; Leslie Phillips, actor, 73; Sir John Quicke, agriculturist, 75; Christopher Robinson, organist, 61; Peter Snow, broadcaster, 59; Jean Southworth, QC, crown court recorder, 71; Luther Vandross, singer, 46; Rachel Whiteread, sculptor, 34; Henry Wrong, chairman, European Arts Foundation, 67.

Death Notices

BANSAL (MILLS). Gillian, loving wife died on April 12th 1997 aged 54. Much loved by family and friends, who will miss her so much.

CHEDDICK. Kathleen, aged 86, passed peacefully away 17th April 1997, after a short illness at Abingdon Hospital. Much loved by family and friends.

EDWARDS. Lorna Margaret Brown, beloved aunt and friend, housing manager, lifelong socialist and Guardian reader, died peacefully on March 26th 1997, aged 94 years. To enquire please ring Judy Paskell on 0161 773 6211.

ELTON. Rose, on April 16 at Crawley Hospital aged 90. Last surviving child of C E Montague, grand-daughter of C P Scott. Cremation at Surrey and Sussex Crematorium on Thursday April 24 at 12.15pm. Family flowers only, donations if desired to NSPCC. Enquiries to Francis Chappell & Sons 01293 521407

FERGUSON. Kim, at Sobell House, Oxford on 15th April after a long struggle against cancer, aged 77. Funeral at Oxford Crematorium, Friday 25th April 12.15pm. No flowers please, donations to British Heart Foundation.

GEORGE. The death occurred on Wednesday 16th April in the comforting care of staff at Wythenshawe Hospital of Betty George (Duff), widow of Arthur George, former executive of The Guardian and Manchester Evening News. Loving mother of Peter, mother-in-law, grandparent, neighbour and dear friend. Service and committal at Manchester Crematorium on Thursday 24th April at 11am. All enquiries to William Peacock Funeral Service Tel. 0161 445 3987.

HUGHES, John Trefor died suddenly at his home in Hove on April 12th aged 46. Dearly loved son of Dorothy and Tom (of Hazelmere, Bucks) and brother of Gwyneth. Funeral enquiries to Nigel Dengate, 01273 206204.

Births

MATOVU, Oliver Thomas Sajabi to Karen Anne (née Matthews) and Daniel Mizal Sajabi on 5th March 1997.

Birthdays

RUSTON, Dennis, retired headteacher aged 60.

Engagements

Miss Abigail Read and Mr Mark Jones. Mr and Mrs Alan Read of Gustard Wood, Hertfordshire have pleasure in announcing the engagement of their daughter Abigail to Mark, son of Mr and Mrs Anthony Jones of Farnham, Surrey.

To place your announcement telephone 0171 713 4567 or fax 0171 713 4129 between 9am and 5pm Mon-Fri.

Face to Faith

Stand up, be counted — and watch the pews empty

Joanna Moorhead

MY FATHER turned up for Sunday mass at his parish church recently to find the priest gone, and in his place an ashen-faced diocesan official. The official explained that the congregation would not be seeing Father X again: in the pub afterwards, my father learned that the priest was in custody on charges of gross indecency. Pictures of the hapless cleric, handcuffed to a police officer, followed in that week's local paper: when I visited the small town a couple of weeks later, the gossipmongers were still having a field day.

This is the ecclesiastical sleaze-factor, and it's every bit as damaging to the Church institution as its political counterpart is to the powers-that-be at Westminster. In many ways it's *more* damaging, for the simple reason that it's closer to home. As far as most people are concerned, politicians are people you see on telly and read about in the papers: your parish priest is someone you see in the flesh every week. My father had read about Bishop Roddy Wright when the scandal over his mistress and love-child rocked the Catholic church last year, but he could put a lot of it down to media sensation. Not this time though. This drama is being played out in his own parish, and going to mass may never be quite the same again.

Sleaze isn't the only problem the Church has in common with the political establishment. Integrity, standing up for what you believe in, being true to your cause: these issues are as relevant to the churches on the threshold of the 21st century as they are to the Labour Party on the threshold of what will probably be its first spell in government for nearly two decades.

Fifteen years ago Labour was talking the language it had always talked, espousing the beliefs it had always espoused; yet it commanded nothing like enough popular support to form a viable government. Today the churches, forced increasingly by our post-Christian, secular society into coalitions of one form or another, are in a similar hole: they are saying what they should be saying. They are standing up for the poor and disadvantaged their founder encouraged them to stand up for, and they are being deserted in the pews. And that makes for an uncertain future: a Bishop of Liverpool in the year 2050 will not be getting the headlines David Sheppard bagged last week if he has no one behind him to lend weight to his words.

The problem is that when the churches say something radical and political they tend to alienate a lot of the people who are still there in the pews, while gaining the admiration of a whole different lot who haven't put a head round a church door since they were christened. Because, strange though it seems to me, there are still people who think that bishops shouldn't meddle in politics. I suppose I find it strange because I'm a Catholic, and when was there ever a time when Catholic bishops weren't involved in politics? From the Borgias to Pope John Paul's role in the tearing down of the Iron Curtain, priests have spent hundreds of years beavering away behind the political scenes, and are certainly not strangers to its mysterious ways.

After all, the Church is, like the political world, a gossipy kind of institution — it's hardly surprising that those who have climbed the greasy pole in that sphere can put the same methods to good use in the world of political decision-making. A see is a bit like a constituency, really: when one is up for re-election, there's a good deal of to-ing and fro-ing and digging around to find out who's suitable. It may not be quite as public as a general election, but it's canvassing and campaigning just the same.

SO, given that Church and politics have so much in common, is there anything the former can learn from the latter? How to deal with the press more effectively, perhaps: is there a Father Mandelson lurking behind some altar somewhere who could sharpen up the image of an institution which looks a bit past its sell-by date for the Millennium? And second, and more important, the Church — like the Labour Party — needs to repackage its message in such a way as to make itself popular again, so that the 21st century doesn't see it sidelined into little more than a pressure group for the poor.

And there's the rub. Because the Labour Party turned itself around by compromising and fudging and watering down its core values, and that is something the Church could never do: Middle-class mediocrity has held its sway in the churches, and for far too long, already; Christianity has an essential message that is different and dangerous and uncomfortable. In the end it may prove difficult to command the votes it needs and if it decides to rewrite its manifesto it will be sticky ground indeed.

Joanna Moorhead is editor of Catholic Life magazine

Co-op injunction foils bid

Galileo forced to delay its offer

Roger Cowe

THE battle for control of the Co-operative movement took an extraordinary turn yesterday when a last minute injunction from the Co-operative Wholesale Society forced predator Andrew Regan to postpone the launch of his hostile offer.

The court move was the latest development in a week which has seen two senior CWS executives suspended for allegedly forging secret links with Galileo, a company headed by the 31-year-old entrepreneur Andrew Regan and backed by offshore investors.

Lawyers for CWS showed the High Court photographic and video evidence to refute claims by one of the executives, Allan Green, that he had not met Mr Regan or his fellow director, David Lyons. The application for the injunction was also supported by affidavits from senior Co-op executives.

Galileo disclosed last night that it had been about to publish its long-awaited strategy for unlocking the multi-billion pound value of the CWS. It had intended to make formal proposals for the conversion of the CWS into a limited company, so that Galileo could then make an offer for it.

But Galileo said it had been prevented from going public by the injunction and "regrets that the members of CWS, both individual and corporate, have for the time being been denied the opportunity to consider its proposals which it is confident would benefit members, employees, customers and the Co-operative movement as a whole".

Despite the CWS's determination not to deal with Mr Regan, he plans to appeal to members to turn the organisation into a conventional limited company. To achieve this, he would need to enlist the support of 10 members to call a special general meeting.

If he were to win the vote, then the CWS would be sold to Galileo, giving members a windfall bonus, similar to those from converting insurers and building societies.

But before that were possible, there would certainly be lengthy legal tussles.

The court order, sought by the CWS, which owns Co-op Bank, the CIS insurance company and several other businesses as well as its retail operations, forbids Mr Regan, Mr Green, Galileo or its parent company, Lanica, from using confidential CWS information. It also requires them to disclose all the information they have and what they have used it for, and to return all papers to the CWS, by 4pm on Tuesday.

The Co-op insisted last night that the injunction did not prevent Galileo going ahead with its long-awaited offer. A spokesman said: "The legal action we have taken does not stop them going ahead with a bid, and in those circumstances it is intriguing that they are saying this at this particular time."

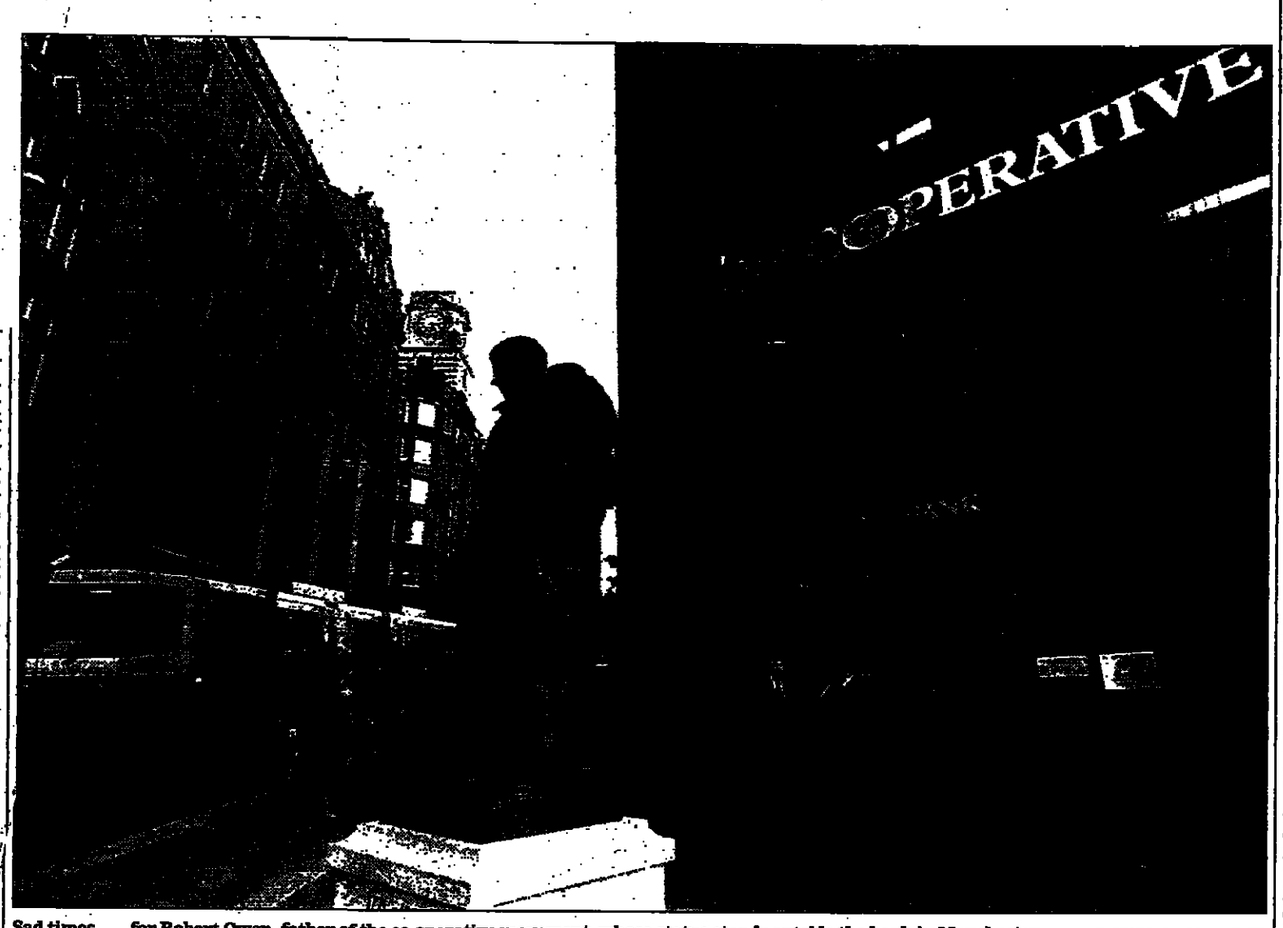
Galileo may go to court next week in an effort to overturn the injunction. But whether it is successful or not it is expected to return with a formal offer for the whole of the CWS in the next 10 days.

Sources suggested the injunction was merely a brief interruption which would make no substantial difference to their plans, but would cause a delay while the legal implications were considered.

Meanwhile lawyers from Linklaters and accountants from KPMG were preparing to spend the weekend ploughing through confidential documents concerning deals between Mr Green, his colleague David Chambers and Mr Regan's companies.

They are believed to have been granted access by the food group Hillsdown to papers referring to the Hobson food company which was acquired from Mr Regan in 1995. Hobson acquired a number of food manufacturing companies from CWS in 1993 before Mr Regan sold out to Hillsdown.

Mr Regan's plans to attack the Co-op first emerged in the middle of February. At that point the shares of his Lanica Trust investment vehicle, which had soared ahead of the news, were suspended by the Stock Exchange until a formal announcement could be made. Trading is stil suspended but may resume once the Lanica offshoot, Galileo, goes public with its plans.



Sad times . . . for Robert Owen, father of the co-operative movement, whose statue stands outside the bank in Manchester PHOTOGRAPH: DON McPHEE

Norwich Union gets nod to float

Tony May

MEMBERS of Norwich Union yesterday voted overwhelmingly in favour of plans to float the UK's third-largest life insurer on the Stock Exchange. It will be valued at about £5 billion and be among Britain's 50 largest companies.

The board booked the cavernous London Arena in Docklands to house an egm in case a large number of the company's 1.9 million members came to vote in person. But only 150 or so members were present and seemed almost outnumbered by the staff and 15-strong board.

Several members spoke passionately in favour of retaining the company's mutual status, but as one, Brian Reeves, noted, the decision to float had already been taken.

He said: "It is unacceptable and a sham to hold this meeting after the vote has already been taken — by post."

His view was underlined when chairman George Paul announced the postal poll had showed a 98.9 per cent majority in favour of the scheme.

After the meeting, Alan Bridgewater, the chief executive, said the meeting had gone very well. He was particularly pleased with the high number, 65 per cent, of policy holders who had voted and said more than half had been in favour of flotation.

To qualify for free share packages worth between £330 and 900, members had to have Norwich Union life insurance, pension or annuity policies in force on October 1, 1996, which still remains in force.

But people with only motor or household insurance policies, permanent health insurance policies and income protection policies do not qualify for free shares.

Norwich Union's 10,000 employees will also get 150 shares each.

The official result of the poll will not be announced until Tuesday as votes cast at yesterday's meeting must be included first. A court hearing to approve the flotation plans officially will take place on April 23.

BT lines up assault on Americas

Nicholas Bannister
Technology Editor

BRITISH Telecom and its US partner, MCI, are poised to break into the burgeoning Spanish-speaking telecom markets through a complex deal with Spain's former state-owned telecom company, Telefonica de Espana.

The key to yesterday's deal is a merger of the Latin American operations of MCI and Telefonica to form Telefonica Panamericana MCI (TPMCI) which will co-ordinate an attack on the region's fast growing markets.

The companies estimate that the Latin American telecom market will grow from the current $36 billion a year to more than $60 billion by the end of the decade.

The deal is a blow for AT&T, the powerful US telecom group which had high hopes of being Telefonica's Latin American partner. In addition, the Spanish company has withdrawn from Unisource, an alliance of smaller European telecom companies with AT&T.

BT, which is in the middle of a £12 billion bid for MCI, is to cement the deal by taking a 2 per cent stake in Telefonica worth £280 million. In turn, Telefonica is to take a similarly valued 1 per cent stake in the British group.

Telefonica is the largest supplier of telecoms to the Spanish-speaking world, with 26.6 million phone lines in Spain and more than 10.2 million abroad. It already runs telecom companies in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Peru and Puerto Rico.

BT has no equity interests in Latin America but MCI has a presence in 17 countries in the region. Under the deal, TPMCI will sell the international business services of MCI and BT under the Concert brand name throughout Latin America.

Telefonica has also agreed to merge its Puerto Rican operations with those of MCI and take a stake in MCI's joint venture in Mexico.

In Spain, Telefonica is to sell the BT-MCI business package and work closely with BT's systems integration business, Syntegra.

Telefonica and MCI plan to set up a fibre-based pan-American network which will range from Alaska, through Canada, to the US, Mexico and into South America.

In addition, the Spanish company will help MCI address the Hispanic community in the US, estimated to be more than 28 million strong.

MCI is already the second largest carrier of phone traffic between the US and Latin America. A BT spokeswoman said that the deal would go ahead even in the unlikely event of BT's bid for MCI being blocked.

A Far East partner remains the last piece of BT's global strategy to be put in place. The group has said that NTT, the Japanese telecom group, would be its preferred partner.

But NTT, the world's largest telecom company despite its concentration on the Japanese market, is being courted by all the world's leading global carriers.

Bank lending at six-year peak

Sarah Ryle

LENDING by banks rose by a record £5,551 million last month despite muted rises in consumer borrowing and mortgage advances.

The British Bankers' Association said the monthly increase was the biggest since it began publishing the data six years ago, with much of the rise due to borrowing by financial firms.

The figures supported speculation by City economists that consumer confidence is weaker than it was at the start of the year. Consumer credit rose by £298 million — well below the recent monthly average increase of £433 million and a stark contrast to February's record leap of more than £500 million. The BBA described the increase as "noticeably more muted than of late".

Mortgage lending by the biggest banks remained buoyant, however. The March increase of £755 million was down on the previous month but above the recent average.

Tim Sweeney, director-general of the BBA, said: "The rise in lending to the personal sector remained over the £1 billion mark but was not as strong as the record February figure."

Lending to the financial sector soared by a record £1,749 million.

The Building Societies Association said the housing recovery was still in good health, with net advances up by 44 per cent — the sort of growth lenders expect at that time of year.

On a seasonally adjusted basis, however, the £995 million net advances were lower than at the same time in 1996, suggesting that the housing market would still be vulnerable to a post-election rise in official interest rates.

Adrian Coles, director-general of the BSA, said: "The recovery remains moderate. There are also indications that house prices have been rising and encouraging more sellers into the market. These growing signs of health in the housing market are increasing the prospects for the sustainable growth in lending, transactions and prices to continue throughout 1997."

The mortgage and bank lending data contributed to the monthly money supply figures (M4) published yesterday by the Bank of England. The Bank said M4 rose 1 per cent in March, taking the annual increase to 11.2 per cent.

Although the growth rate suggested inflationary pressure, the apparent slowdown in the consumer and mortgage sectors would deter price rises, analysts said.

Deutsche Bank tugs reins on subsidiary

Lisa Buckingham

DEUTSCHE Bank is planning to strengthen management of the unit trust business run by its London subsidiary, Morgan Grenfell, following the scandal in which Peter Young was found to have broken rules by diverting funds into a web of Luxembourg companies.

A spokesman for Deutsche Morgan Grenfell denied the move meant a fresh layer of supervision was being imposed from Frankfurt but did admit that a German manager might join the London operation to strengthen management.

Observers said, however, that the prospect of someone from head office being parachuted in suggested a lack of confidence in the London operation.

In another effort to bolster retail fund management, MGAM's administration business in Dublin is to come under the direct control of Frankfurt.

The unit trust business accounts for about £3 billion of MGAM's £70 billion portfolio and the company has admitted there are signs that business has been damaged by the Young scandal as well as the departure of self-styled "star fund manager" Nicola Horlick, who was accused of trying to defect to a rival.

Robert Smith, chief executive of MGAM, said the flow of new business had slowed to £1.6 billion since September, when the Young affair surfaced.

Second warning this year knocks Chemring shares down a third

Ian King

CHEMRING, which makes lifejackets, anti-missile decoys and distress flares, lost over a third of its market value yesterday after issuing its second profits warning of 1997.

Shares in Chemring tumbled 60p to 125p after the group said it had been hit by trading difficulties in its protective clothing division and warned it would lose £2 million during the first half of the financial year.

Chemring blaming "commercial reasons" for closing its firework operation.

The company, which has also been hit by falling orders for distress flares from the British and US armies, has embarked on a radical restructuring that will result in around 140 of the 1,200-strong workforce losing their jobs.

But Sir William Barlow, who recently became non-executive chairman, insisted the company was now on a firm footing and would return to profitability during the second half.

Sir William said Chemring had been forced into putting out two profits warnings this year because at the time of the first warning, in February, it had still been expecting more orders on the protective clothing side.

Exchange unveils plan to end FTSE 100 deal delays

Julia Finch

THE Stock Exchange yesterday announced proposals designed to ensure details of all deals in FTSE 100 shares are available immediately to all market users. The rules should result in tighter share price spreads for small investors.

Details of "block" trades, including the prices involved, can take up to five days to be made public at present.

These deals account for only 8 per cent of stock market trades by volume but about a quarter in terms of value.

The delay in publishing details means the prices quoted for shares may not reflect the latest market activity.

Market-makers have fought hard to prevent the rule change, which will allow investors and intermediaries to be better informed about what is going on in the market.

Foreign institutions are especially likely to welcome the change. "It is a refinement of the US system," said Richard Kilsby, director of market services at the Stock Exchange. "It should be the best in the world. Private investors may notice some price improvements."

The exchange is also demanding that details of deals being worked on, but not yet completed, be made public.

Saturday Notebook

Big catch that slipped the net

Edited by Alex Brummer

PETER Bonfield and his fellow BT executives have lost no time since British shareholders gave their approval, despite some reservations on the governance front, to the BT-MCI merger.

Having locked up Portugal Telecom earlier this week, BT-MCI (or Concert, as we will have to call it) has now aligned itself with Telefonica de Espana through an exchange of share stakes worth £280 million on each side.

The significance of BT's conquest of the Iberian peninsula is that not only has it edged out its main European competitors, Brussels regulators notwithstanding, but it also has built itself an important telecoms bridge to Latin America, which in the late 1990s is seen as the most promising of the emerging markets, as evidenced by recent expansions there by HSBC and Lloyds Bank.

As telecoms markets open up around the world — after decades of tight controls and government ownership — BT is determined to stay ahead of its rivals Global One (involving France Telecom, Deutsche Telekom and Sprint) and AT&T. Certainly, the combination of the marketing skills of MCI, a post-AT&T latecomer to the industry, and the strong financial base of BT should enable Concert to be the global leader.

How much easier it would have been had BT been more patient and generous in its negotiations with Cable & Wireless. With Dick Brown leading from the front as chief executive, through his cable deals he has quickly demonstrated how valuable a property C&W is. It has a head start in most global markets, from the Americas (it is the top player in the Caribbean region) to the Middle East (where it has a valuable stake in Bezeq) and the Far East.

Mr Brown is currently seeking to leverage C&W's jewel, Hong Kong Telecom, one of the most advanced digital telecoms systems in the world, into Beijing, working against the deadlines of its financial results next month and the handover of Hong Kong to China on June 30. This would certainly secure C&W's position as the global telecoms company to watch: but even without that it remains for BT the big catch which should never have been allowed to slip away.

Safety first

BY ALL accounts, the fine levied by Phillip Thorpe of Imro on Morgan Grenfell Asset Management over the Peter Young affair is proving a salutory lesson for the unit trust industry. Whereas investment trusts, as directly quoted companies, generally have a good sprinkling of independent directors sitting on their boards, the average unit trust board is most likely to be made up of the senior sales team and rarely has non-executives around the table.

This has led at least one fund management group with a retail arm to review all of its arrangements with the main audit committee in an attempt to tighten up procedures. In the view of this fund manager, the trustees, although they collect fat fees (£377,000 in the case of General Accident at the MGAM European trusts), do little to justify such payment. The most that can be expected is the odd informal meeting with the managers, who will more than likely explain that the reason the funds look a little top-heavy with unquoted stocks (as was the case in the MGAM European funds) is that several of these companies will be coming to the market soon.

What should the owners of unit trust companies do to ensure that savers are not put at risk? First, they need to make sure that the trustees sweat for their money. By all accounts, the quality of work done by trustees is cursory and easily circumvented by less-than-scrupulous fund managers.

Second, the owners of the unit trust companies need to demonstrate that there is some higher independent authority watching what is going on. If this is not practical at each unit trust, because there are so many, then there is a need to establish a panel of independent directors somewhere above the individual boards to whom the trustees and auditors report directly. This board should also be responsible for establishing risk-management models.

A reasonably rigorous process should cut the risks of another MGAM occurring. But it does not rule out the necessity for unit trusts and other fund management outfits to ensure they are backed by sufficient capital to guarantee against a MGAM-scale disaster.

Regan setback

THE CWS and its adviser, SBC Warburg, have bought themselves sometime with an American-style injunction designed to force Andrew Regan, his associate David Lyons and suspended Co-op executive Allan Green to come clean as to what they know about the internal workings of the group and when they knew it. But there is no point in Co-op chief executive Graham Melmoth — as he looks across a horizon of vanishing mutuals, from Norwich Union to Alliance & Leicester — believing he can keep the Rochdale citadel from being stormed. The work which Warburgs is doing is no doubt as much about realising best prices for members as defending against invaders.

Whatever occurs, Mr Regan's temporarily aborted £1.1 billion cash offer to the 300,000 members of the CWS looks hopelessly inadequate. The CWS may not appear that profitable: but this has never been its main objective. What it is, however, is asset-rich. By some accounts, the insurance company CIS could be worth £3 billion in a booming market for financial assets; the highly regarded bank upwards of £500 million. Then there are the huge landholdings, the funeral parlours and much else to take into account.

The financial services companies should never be allowed to fall into Mr Regan's hands, even on a short-term basis. The authorities, quite rightly, are not too keen on offshore outfits, with little track record, owning chunks of an industry which is so critical to the financial security of the individual.

New Zealand dairy executives arrested

Charlotte Denny

SIX senior executives of the New Zealand Dairy Board have been arrested by Customs and Excise officers on charges of evading European Union tariffs on hundreds of tonnes of Anchor butter.

The UK-based executives, from two subsidiary companies of the dairy board, Anchor Foods and Milk Products Holdings, were charged in the city magistrates court on Thursday and released on bail.

The charges relate to duty on butter imported in excess of New Zealand's annual EU quota of 76,000 tonnes which attracts a reduced tariff rate of £700 per tonne instead of £2,000. The amount of unpaid duty is alleged to be about £5 million.

Customs and Excise said yesterday that an investigation had been going on for months into shipments in 1995 and 1996. Officials had questioned and cautioned the same executives in November last year in connection with the case.

In a statement released in Wellington yesterday, dairy board chairman Sir Dryden Spring said the board was entirely satisfied that the executives were innocent.

Sir Dryden said the Board had been co-operating fully with Customs and Excise over the matter and described the arrests as "outrageous".

"It is well known in the international dairy trade that New Zealand has experienced difficulties with the importation of butter into the EU following the increased quota in mid-1996 made possible by the Gatt agreement," he added.

New Zealand is taking a case against the European Union to the World Trade Organisation after the EU ruled last year that "spreadable" butter was not eligible for reduced duties.

"Coming on top of the exclusion of spreadable butter from the quota, we find it hard to accept that this sudden and Draconian action was not motivated by a desire to restrict trade by non-tariff means," Sir Dryden said.

BT missed its best connection, page 11

Injunction blocks Co-op bid, page 11

Finance Guardian

Blue money rises to the top

RICHARD THOMAS and NICHOLAS WHITTAKER find the Rich List testimony to the enduring profitability of porn

IT IS 3.30pm in what should be a sleepy London pub, and 30 men are thronging the main bar, drinking at a brisk pace. The attention of the diverse group — which includes pin-striped City types and construction shift workers — is suddenly diverted to the end of the room.

A burly gentleman uses an unnecessary microphone: "I know you're not here for the music, so here she is ... the gorgeous, and lovely, Claudia." The gorgeous, as well as lovely, Claudia then mounts a DIY stage at the end of the bar and takes most of her clothes off. She leaves on some knee-length black boots.

Claudia's choice of music kicks off with the inescapable Things Can Only Get Better by D:REAM — a subliminal message from Mandelson? — and concludes with the equally appropriate Every Time You Go Away, You Take a Piece of Me With You, by Paul Young.

At the end of Claudia's set her colleague Mariana tours the bar with a pint mug, collecting cash from the punters. A £1 coin seems to be the going rate. "That's their wages," explains Rob from behind the bar. "On a good day they can make maybe a oner [£100]." Claudia disagrees: "No, it is not so much as that, no. I wish."

Here, nonetheless, is the "blue pound" in action, with pubs, retailers and publishers cashing in on male sexual appetites in a manner as old as history. The beer in The Griffin is the same price as in the other (empty) bar, says Rob. "But we sell a lot more of it." Without the attractions of Claudia and Mariana there might be two or three determined customers, he reckons.

In the aftermath of the politically-correct early 1990s, the power of the blue pound is in full rebound. Pub strippers, once thought to have been consigned to the 1960s and 1970s, are acceptable again. Men who would not dream of reaching for the top shelf — or, at least, not in public view — happily pick up the "new lad" titles of FHM and Loaded. From there it is a short step to the softer-porn titles.

The new, more confident, masculinity is underlined when Claudia leaves the stage. A white screen drops down, and the next thing the assembled clients learn is that British golfer David Carter is one over par in the Cannes open. Sky Sports is sandwiched between the strippers.

Although the level of acceptance of legitimised voyeurism is new, the money to be made from it is not. Although it is rare to see someone buy a top-shelf magazine — WH Smith has now withdrawn all top-shelf titles because of sluggish sales — millions are paying up, as the porn kings know only too well.

The Sunday Times annual survey of the UK's wealthiest 1000 — now snappily titled The Rich List — is always sure to contain two or three porn barons amongst the royals, retailers and milk carton magnates. This year, Paul Raymond, Soho's glamour ringmaster — who is sandwiched between two knights of the realm at number 43 — is thought to be worth £350 million.

Just above Mr Raymond is Sir Donald Gosling, who makes his money from NCP car parks; just below is Sir Cameron Mackintosh, although even his wealth is part-based on takings from Miss Saigon, which features the travails of a "good-time" girl.

The Gold brothers, David and Ralph, are worth £230 million and David Sullivan — with whom the Golds jointly own the Sport newspaper titles — has a price tag of about £200 million. Not only rich, but all comfortably within the top hundred.

The wealth has not all come from publishing magazines, of course. Britain's pornocrats have long since diversified into other fields — property, racehorses, football clubs, satellite TV — but any review of Britain's blue economy has to begin with a look at the top-shelf titles which provide enough seed capital to start building business empires.

Round the corner from The Griffin, the local newsagent stocks no fewer than 36 varied offerings, each filling a different niche in the male pysche: Big Boobs, Asian Babes, Long Legs. Combined sales of Britain's top ten porn titles nudge two million copies a month, bringing in annual domestic sales of some £45 million.

SIX of the best-selling ten are Paul Raymond publications, including the top two. Escort, in pole position, sells 365,000 copies a month at £1.40. In second place, the more up-market Mayfair, priced at £1.95, clocks up monthly sales of more than 295,000.

Respectable sales by any standard, they are outstripped only by the established female market — Woman, Woman's Own, and Women's Weekly — which sell up to 5 million a week, and hold their own against "girl power" titles such as Cosmopolitan and Company. For delivering male readers and advertising targets they have no real competition, outselling Loaded, FHM, Esquire and GQ by two to one.

As well as the mainstream titles, there are a clutch of even more closely-targeted publications, available only in dedicated sex shops, which probably make around £30 million a year. David Sullivan has a near-monopoly in this downstairs market.

Some blue pounds are also earned overseas: combined export sales of Britain's top-shelfers are around £22 million, mostly to Europe and such ex-pat countries as South Africa and Australia.

Even so, British porn barons look modest players compared with Playboy's Hugh Hefner — whose bunny symbol is a global marketing pull — as well as with Penthouse's Bob Guccione, Larry Flynt and Al Goldstein. Monthly sales of Playboy and Penthouse nudge three and a half million and two and a quarter million respectively in the US alone. Overseas sales double these figures.

In the UK, the big players have adopted different approaches to diversifying beyond their core market. Galaxy, the Essex-based pornographer which publishes Fiesta, has dabbled with gardening and video titles, while Docklands-based Northern & Shell currently publishes OK! and has launched the Fantasy Channel. Both tried pornographic titles for women and failed.

Paul Raymond owns large chunks of the Soho property market, with assets approaching £50 million.

David Sullivan and the Gold brothers each own half of Birmingham City FC, worth about £20 million: blue pounds backing the Blues. Jaqueline Gold has turned the once-moribund Ann Summers lingerie brand into a £17.5 million-a-year business, more than matching profits from her father's and uncle's publishing side.

Add on the vast profits skimmed off premium-rate phone numbers, the brisk trade in "marital aids", pirate video sales and prostitution, and it is clear than porn is an integral part of Britain's commercial life. The main five publishing firms give full-time employment to around a thousand people.

Small ads in Razzle, Escort and Club offer readers a variety of products and services — everything from processing bedroom snaps to selling videos of well-oiled hunks. The addresses may surprise: not grubby inner-city areas, but leafy suburbs and genteel resorts. The epicentres of Britain's porn trade are such places as Frinton, Lincoln and Halifax.

Dozens of companies have benefited, from the giant Hunterprint, in Tyne & Wear, which has printed Paul Raymond's magazines for the past 30 years, to medium-sized typesetters and film processors all over the country.

And pubs, of course. Ironically, given its often secret face, the sex industry is perhaps the freest market of all. Every need is catered for, customers know what they are buying and supply is highly sensitive to demand. If pubs need strippers, young women in need of money can always be found.

The informal payment system in The Griffin ensures that clients are able to reward the performers precisely. Mariana does not share Claudia's scruples and strips bare: style enough, her mug is fuller. The obligatory gentleman in a mac even puts a note in for Mariana.

And everyone is happy, or at least appears to be. Claudia says, "It's not bad, you know." And one of the female barmaids, busy collecting glasses, is unphased by the spectacle. "I don't mind it at all," she says. "At least its busier. You just get used to it."

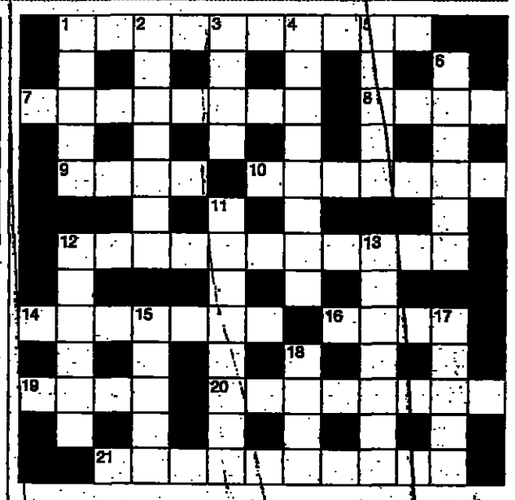
Nicholas Whittaker is the author of Blue Period: Notes From A Life In The Titillation Trade, published in May by Gollancz, at £9.99.

Girlie magazines

Magazine	Owner	Monthly sales	Cover price, £	[illegible]	[illegible]
Escort	PRP	365,095	1.40	6.64	2,500
Mayfair	PRP	295,645	1.95	7.49	2,640
Fiesta	Galaxy	243,660	1.95	6.16	4,100
Men Only	PRP	229,160	1.95	6.06	2,500
Club	PRP	192,800	1.95	4.89	2,100
Parade	Goldstar	150,000	1.50	2.92	[illegible]
Razzle	PRP	138,665	1.40	2.82	1,500
Mensworld	PRP	[illegible]	1.95	2.58	1,750
Penthouse	N&S	[illegible]	2.95	3.87	2,750
Knave	Galaxy	[illegible]	2.25	2.47	2,536

Quick Crossword No. 8415

Solution No. 8414



Across

1 It causes rough weather — and loss of trade (10)
7 Throw overboard (8)
8 Thought (4)
9 Auction (4)
10 Property — of the upper class? (7)
12 Light sausage, served in roll (11)
14 Irregularity (7)
16 Courage — needed by chickens (4)
19 A blow — on the wrist? (4)
20 Person's magnetic charm (8)
21 Frothy coffee (10)

Down

1 Lees (5)
2 Kneecap (7)
3 Facile (4)
4 Voluptuous (8)
5 Oxford college — window (5)
6 Rankle (6)
11 Male Jew's headgear (8)
12 Mould — mushroom etc (6)
13 End stations (6)
15 Sicilian secret society (5)
17 Musical time (4)
18 Body powder (4)

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QUOTING: RSGDNSF

Saturday April 19 1997

The Guardian

the week

STEVE CAPLIN

On the night of May 1 champagne will be a campaigner's best friend. **Clare Longrigg** and **Paul Kelso** on where the winners and losers will elect to have a good time

L is for victory

Late on Thursday evening, as John Major fielded questions from a baffled BBC audience anxious to know exactly where he stood on Europe, another major event in the election campaign was getting underway in Hampstead, north London.

With just a fortnight to go until polling day, Peter Stoddart, editor of the Times, was hosting the first cocktail party of the election season. Among the guests exchanging campaign gossip over the pink champagne in a marquee in his garden were Lord Tebbit, authors Salman Rushdie and John Mortimer, publisher Carmen Calill, Bob Worcester, the managing director of Mori (the only one who has seen any real action so far), and Tory Eurosceptic-in-chief Bill Cash MP. Peter Mandelson was there, looking relaxed, though he foreswore the champagne, having given up alcohol until May 2.

While the Prime Minister's extraordinary plea for unity marked the beginning of the campaign-proper, for seasoned partygoers, Stoddart's bash was a not-so-dry-run for election night, when making sure you're at the right party can be as difficult as keeping up with the results.

It is often at the election night party that the bottled-up emotions of the campaign come flooding out. In 1992, Basildon was the defining moment when Labour realised their hopes were dashed and a flabbergasted Tory party began to feel that it might have won against the odds.

The Basildon result came early enough to spoil the party for many Labour supporters, who abandoned their unopened bottles of champagne and went sorrowfully home. For the Tories, the party had hardly begun, and the cheers that accompanied Chris Patten's defeat in Bath only momentarily spoiled their fun.

In two weeks' time, emotions are also likely to be running high. Arguably, the spectacle at parties across the country could mark the most — dare one suggest the only? — dramatic moment in a singularly lacklustre campaign.

"Perhaps then people will begin to tell the truth, and how refreshing that would be," says Andrew Neil. "The Tory right may speak their mind openly, that the campaign should have been fought on an openly Eurosceptic ticket, and the Labour left bemoan how socialism has been sold down the river."

So, at last, election night parties promise some veritas. At their most lavish, they can be grotesquely, defiantly prodigal. In 1987, Sir James Goldsmith staged an extravaganza in the grounds of Cliveden on the occasion of Mrs Thatcher's triumphant third victor. A suitable setting, perhaps, bearing in mind the estate's history of debauchery. Not only was a band flown in especially from New Orleans, but a New Orleans-style house was built on the lawn to accommodate it.

In the presence of the guest of honour, Rupert Murdoch, a feast was served from the banqueting hall with the main course of fish stacked six feet high. "It was an unbelievable display of conspicuous consumption," Neil recalls. "I remember thinking, 'Thank God I've already voted — this is enough to drive anybody into the hands of Labour'."

page 14

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the week that was

Us on us

The British view

"YET again, Britain is gripped in gridlock as a security alert shuts three big rail stations and paralyses the motorway network around Manchester. Whenever [the IRA] strike like this, they strengthen the resolve of ordinary people not to be beaten by them. It was a lesson that Hitler learned — these foolish IRA thugs would do well to ponder on the British bulldog spirit."
Lancashire Evening Telegraph

"THE powers-that-be at Southwark Council have been branded petty dictators after issuing a protocol to staff on the general election. The letter bans housing staff from showing any political allegiance, including stickers on windscreens, clipboards and bags. They are also forbidden from canvassing outside office hours in a neighbourhood where they work."
South London Press

"AS WRU leaders agonise over where the Welsh team will play their Five Nations home games while the National Stadium is being rebuilt, no Welsh rugby-follower will be happy that these matches [will be] played outside Wales. Wembley, the home of English soccer, is certainly preferable to Twickenham, home of English rugby."
The Western Mail

Them on them

The global view

"The complicated voting system for council elections has left many confused. Not even the experts who deal with it each day can come up with something that even resembles simple English. A mathematical genius has more hope than an average person of ascertaining what ramifications his voting selections will have."
The Murray Pioneer, Renmark, South Australia

"After a high-level meeting over the diplomatic parking issue Thursday, city and US officials said they [were] getting closer to forcing diplomats to pay parking tickets, an issue that has roiled the relationship between Mayor Rudolph Giuliani and the UN. As his stretch limousine idled outside City Hall (without parking), William Richardson, the new United States delegate to the United Nations, met with Giuliani and top aides Thursday to try to "cool down the temperature" on the issue, as Richardson put it."
The New York Times

"To settle a legacy of the Vietnam war, Hanoi on April 7 honoured an agreement to reimburse the US for debts owed by its anti-communist ally, the former Saigon regime. Vietnam signed a deal with US Treasury Secretary Robert Rubine to restructure $145 million debt."
South China Morning Post

THEME OF THE WEEK
THROWBACKS

Unquestionably the best political story of the week was the London Evening Standard's revelation that John Major is keeping his strength up through the gruelling election campaign by eating Marmite soldiers for breakfast every morning.

The Marmite habit, which Major has openly indulged even in front of the media entourage on his borrowed British Midland battle-jet, has prevented him (so far) from catching a nasty sniffle which the accompanying journalists have been falling foul of one after another.

How typically inept of the Conservative campaign managers not to have exploited the Marmite story. A party political showing Prime Minister Major in the year 2001 spreading Marmite on his soldiers inside Number 10 from a jar clearly price-marked 2 Euros would surely convince even the hardest sceptic that everything will be all right post single currency?

Perhaps a certain squeamishness from Central Office vis-a-vis the popular yeast extract can be explained by the Marmite company's former ownership. It was once, of course, part of Cavenham Foods, the flagship company of Sir James Goldsmith, who is not currently very popular with the Tory establishment.

The Standard's Marmite sensation was part of a wider trend towards odd, quite nostalgic, throwbacks this week.

Ford decided not to ditch its Escort model, which was introduced 30 years ago, and grew from being the prototypical Dagenham Dustbin to the UK's top selling car right into the nineties, as well as a favourite today from Argentina to China.

The company floated a notion of giving its next mid-sized saloon a new name, but was halted by what it said was an "overwhelming" hostile response from Ford Escort fans. Thus was the Escort reprieved.

The Labour Party too contributed to the week's throwback zeitgeist by bizarrely introducing its bulldog into the election campaign. It may have been an ironic, dozing bulldog which starred in the party political, but it is hard to see the Tory opposition not seizing on the bulldog breed joke the first time the new government finds itself cast as the lapdog of Europe or the USA.

But it was the royal family's bulldog, Prince Philip, who threw back the furthest on Wednesday when he managed his most splendid gaffe in a career spent principally opening his mouth to put his foot in it. At a trade fair in Hanover, the 75-year-old duke welcomed Chancellor Kohl with a friendly "Welcome, Reichskanzler" — a title which hasn't been popular in Germany since it belonged to Hitler.

The error, [illegible] Basil Fawlty [illegible] the war, has variously been explained as a bad joke and a mere slip of the tongue, but whatever, it went down extremely badly with the Germans, with whom the British are not all that popular at the moment anyway thanks to tension over monetary union.

So if you happen to greet Chancellor Kohl this weekend, remember: it's Bundeskanzler.

Jonathan Margolis

HAVE YOU BEEN PAYING ATTENTION ?

1. What is US Masters champion "Tiger" Woods' real name?
(a) Eldrick (b) Ethan
(c) Elmore (d) Ethelred

2. Fearnot Winterwarmer made his TV debut. In what did he appear?

3. Which organisation will drive into the future without its royal emblem?

4. "A part of me — perhaps my best part — still resides there." Who was crying for Argentina?

5. Which party offered to end corruption and cut taxation by 15 per cent?
(a) The Natural Law Party
(b) The Referendum Party
(c) The Monster Raving Loony Party
(d) The Liberal Democrats

6. "I shall miss him. At the last election he was by far my most intelligent opponent." John Major on which absent political leader?

7. Speckled Woods, Grey Hairstreaks and Grizzled Skippers have made an unusually early appearance. What are they?

8. To Pauline Curson a bouncing boy called Reece. What was his birth weight?
(a) 12lb 7oz (b) 14lb 3oz
(c) 16lb 9oz (d) 18lb 4oz

9. "They are feisty young women and this is the way they talk." Who — and why were they being defended?

10. Who did Stella McCartney replace as chief designer at the House of Chloe?

11. "There is no crisis", said governor David Smallman as he sailed out of the capital Jamestown. Where?

12. The Art Of The Game caused a storm. Who painted it?
(a) Rembrandt
(b) Poussin
(c) Michael Browne
(d) Eric Cantona

13. "You can't tell all the truth all the time, can you?" Whose alleged words to whom?

14. Prince Charles threatened to trade in his Bentley unless the police agreed to bomb-proofing it. What did he plan to switch to?
(a) Mercedes (b) Audi
(c) BMW (d) Skoda

15. Who won the romantic novel of the year award?
(a) Maggie Gee (b) Sue Gee
(c) Jean Marsh (d) Will Self

Answers, bottom left of this page

When breaking up is hard to do — don't bother

This week last year April 17, 1996

The marriage of the Duke and Duchess of York ended in divorce a year ago this week but the speculation about the nature of their relationship continues.

She walked out of Sunninghill, their ostentatious home and a wedding present from the Queen, in 1992 and moved into a £6,000-a-month rented house on the Wentworth Estate. Andrew has always been desperate for a reconciliation but, until recently, not desperate enough to defy his parents. Now Sarah has moved back "purely for financial reasons". As she told OK magazine this week, "I couldn't afford to rent any longer. I'm trying to be a 'good girl' financially".

Despite Sarah's avowed infidelity and the revelations about her financial and private affairs, the couple had resisted pressure to divorce. He had every reason to leave her but he loved her and wanted her to remain. She left him knowing he still loved her.

Finally, under pressure from his parents, particularly Prince Philip, the Duke caved in and agreed to end his 10-year marriage. The Queen was said to be "saddened" but insisted that it was a "personal decision" for the couple.

So, on April 17, in a drab courtroom in Somerset House, attended by 26 journalists, the marriage was pronounced to have irretrievably broken down.

Andrew headed off on a naval exercise and remained out of the public eye for some time. Sarah, on one of her numerous skiing holidays, pronounced it the saddest day of her life but said they were still "bestest friends".

And that, for most couples, would have been that — weekly telephone calls to arrange visits to the children and strained conversations on the doorstep as they return from a day out with Dad.

But the Yorks are not like other couples. They have remained almost unnaturally close since they were divorced and photographs of them laughing and smiling together have provoked speculation that they would be reconciled.

The duchess remained at Romenda Lodge and embarked on a high-profile campaign to pay off her debts — rumoured to be £4 million. There was the modelling, the advertising, the £1 million deal to represent Weightwatchers and the contract to

My wife next door ... Andrew and Sarah

become a roving reporter for Paris Match. As each campaign became tackier and the columnists squawked louder, Andrew remained loyal.

Friends close to the duke have said he refuses to believe anything bad about her — despite what seem to be her strenuous efforts to plumb new depths. It is almost as if, knowing that he still loves her, she is trying to set him free, to convince him that she is not worthy of his support.

In the weeks following the divorce, the scandals about her private life continued, this time centred on her relationship with the millionaire toe-sucker John Bryan.

By this time the duchess had turned to the American PR Guru Howard Rubenstein to try and restore her tarnished image and gather any shreds of self-respect. She spoke of her life as a "fresh clean page" and talked of her quest for inner peace.

Although she had signed a lucrative book deal to tell her story, she was beaten to it. First by the tapes made by the north London pyschic, Madame Vasso, who embarked on the chat show circuit with alacrity, then by Dr Allan Starkie, a friend of John Bryan, in a book she had failed to ban.

Under pressure from his disapproving parents, there were rumours that Andrew would apply for custody of Beatrice and Eugenie.

He had already given Sarah £400,000 and could not afford any more. He was said to be upset at the so-called "Doomsday Deal" on offer from the palace, but this time she had gone too far. The deal was said to include payment of her debts, money for a new life: he would have the children, she would stay silent for ever.

But the deal was never made and when Sarah announced [illegible] she was planning to move into a smaller house, Andrew persuaded the Queen to reconsider his original plan for Sarah to move back to Sunninghill.

On February 26 Sarah came home. The princesses have their old rooms, she the guest room — until the stable block has been converted for them.

It would seem to be a perfect arrangement. She has the luxury she craves and he is close to the woman he loves. Publicly their relationship is over, privately no one need ever know what goes on behind the closed door of "Southyork".

Kate Watson-Smyth

Lig for victory

◀ page 13 It is unlikely that Sir James will be in such a jolly mood on May 1, if the polls continue to award his Referendum Party a mere two per cent support. As a player in the election this time, rather than an influential bystander, he may feel obliged to rein in his excesses. On the other hand, since the Referendum party appears to be the party of the moneyed minority, they probably won't settle for a couple of sandwiches and a can of Coke.

This year, as in 1992, the Daily Telegraph party will be the hot ticket for party apparatchiks on the right. Five years ago, the paper's proprietor, Conrad Black, played host to over 200 guests at the Savoy Hotel on the Strand, an event that grew increasingly riotous as it became clear that predictions of a hung Parliament or even a Labour victory were desperately wide of the mark. On that occasion, among the guests present to applaud Tory victories in Basildon, Battersea, and Bath (among this crowd Chris Patten's downfall was greeted, as befits a One Nation Tory, with cheers) were the entire Thatcher family, Telegraph columnist Peregrine Worsthorne, Michael Grade, Sue Lawley and Jilly Cooper.

After the party, guests retired for analysis and reflection at the College Street home of former Tory treasurer Alistair McAlpine. Here a coterie of the those closest to Mrs Thatcher, "a room brimming with Tory expertise" according to one guest — including Tim Bell, Charles Saatchi, Nicholas Ridley and Lord Tebbit — met to pore over the late declarations, while upstairs in a private room the former prime minister and her children were able to rest and prepare messages of support for Mr Major.

Election night fever can be the gauge of wider feeling. As Europe swings gradually to the left, the spectacle of exiles celebrating their access to power is becoming familiar. In Italy, where last year the left-wing alliance unseated the Christian Democrats after nearly 50 years, scenes of jubilation were tempered by disbelief, which delayed celebrations somewhat. Street parties and concerts were held more than 24 hours after the results were announced — or as soon as they could be organised by a stunned electorate.

Andrew Neil was in Paris in May 1995 when Jacques Chirac was elected president. "It was a warm night and there were thousands of young yuppies popping champagne and driving around in open-top sports cars."

Could similar scenes of joy greet Labour's return to government after 18 wilderness years? Neil thinks not. "I can't imagine that happening. The whole impression given by this election has been that the motivation for people is a desire to throw the bastards out rather than for a new dawn with Labour."

THE Labour party itself is wary of planning extravagant victory celebrations. For many, the memory of the last election night is still raw: one veteran remembers sitting on a table among unopened cases of champagne feeling "suicidal". As a result, organisers are likely to pretend until the last that they have not anticipated a walkover. Streamers and champagne will be sneaked into Millbank, while a hotel has reportedly been booked, but preparations are being kept modestly under wraps.

Nervous leftwing intelligentsia, including some Labour party notables, will be watching the results at a party held by radical silk Helena Kennedy and former MP and Hampstead worthy, Ben Whitaker. Apparently, Kennedy vowed to host her own bash after attending John Birt's 1992 election-knees up. It seems the sight of so many suited executives hanging on the DG's every word was too much for her, and she vowed to do something a little more fun next time around.

In the event of a Labour landslide, this will be the venue where the Establishment-In-Waiting, long-term Labour supporters such as John Mortimer, Geoffrey Robertson QC, Kathy Lette and Lord Hollick, may gather to prepare for power. Not to be outdone, Melvyn Bragg will be holding an alternative celebration for the rest of the leftwing media darlings.

The concentration of the political elite in the capital, the celebrations will be by no means limited to London. In Scotland, Labour will be holding a party at its election media centre in a converted girls' public school in Glasgow, though proceedings will also be muted by the party's caution that extends across the border: "We'll be working hard; there'll be no victory dances up here," a press officer says.

The glitterati north of the border are expected to make their way to a bash hosted traditionally on election night by the BBC at its headquarters in Glasgow's West End, the Scottish equivalent of Islington. Those who attended the 1992 party described it as "something of a wake" but this time round it is expected to be a much cheerier occasion.

Across the water in Belfast, you can be sure that nothing at all will be going on on Thursday night. Not because the Northern Irish are a particular dour or disinterested lot, but because the results won't be known by then. Counting across Northern Ireland will not begin until Friday morning, the delay being put down to security reasons.

With the first results expected in early afternoon, the most likely venue for celebrations will be Sinn Fein's Connolly headquarters, where the party is confidently predicting that Gerry Adams will be returned as MP for West Belfast after an absence of five years. The Ulster Unionists' leader, David Trimble, is also likely to be celebrating on Friday night at the party's Glen Gall Street premises in the city centre.

After a campaign that will go down in history for its lack of passion, the on-the-night celebrations look like being equally slick and exclusive. To go with their high-tech studio set, ITN have called their party an "election experience". Guests are invited to Gray's Inn Road from 9pm to 4am on election night for a "cocktail soirée" where they then have only four hours to fill in (if they haven't had enough sleaze by this stage, it's only a short walk to King's Cross) before they are allowed back into the ITN building for a "champagne brunch" from 8am to 4pm. Whatever the election outcome, this hangover-inducing schedule is likely to have the building resounding with cries of "never again".

Literary London will be gathered at the Notting Hill home of Martin Amis and Isabel Fonseca, who are throwing a party for their great friend, novelist Edmund White. The party was planned to celebrate publication of White's new book, aptly named The Farewell Symphony, and the election is expected to add a mere frisson to the night's revelries: White lives in Paris and has therefore been spared most of the pre-publicity.

On the other hand, Amis once famously said that "every writer in England votes Labour," so obviously this is the hot ticket for left-leaning literati. Bookish wannabes are said to be clamouring for an invitation: the guest list is a very tight 75.

John Birt will be holding his usual election night party, although this year it is said to be an exclusive affair, to thank the more exalted contributors. Gilt-edged invitations with gold corporation logo offer refreshments "throughout the night" and breakfast at 1am. This looks like being the top media ticket, if not the most fun, so the privileged few are likely to drop by for a name-check on their way somewhere else.

While Labour supporters are drinking champagne, the socialists will be sitting it out. A bastion of Old Labour says he won't vote, is unlikely to be following the election, and will definitely not be in party mood.

The Spectator, the thinking-person's organ of the right, was planning a party of its own but hearing that all their chums would be at the Daily Telegraph's party, decided to cut their losses and make sure they were on the guest list of Telegraph editor, Charles Moore, instead.

Frank Johnson of the Spectator expects all "the usual party-going suspects" to be at Christopher's, for what he calls "the night of execution". "I'm expecting gallows humour," he says, "although whichever way it goes the Spectator will be all right. I'm looking forward to either five years of Blair-baiting and the battle for the Conservative Party, or the celebration of a miracle victory!"

Editor Charles Moore plays host this time round (Black will be abroad), and is clearly prepared for the worst. Not all the 300 guests, though, are likely to mourn the passing of this government as long as they did the demise of Mrs Thatcher in 1991. "I'm expecting a jolly evening, we're calling it the Waterloo Ball," he said, a pun that surely owes more to John Major's fate than the restaurant's Wellington Street address.

It was no good looking for great Labour festivities after the 1992 ballot . . . Neil Kinnock and Glenys take it on the chin.
PHOTOGRAPH BY SEAN SMITH

Those political parties for the floating ligger...

7am: Polls open
9pm: Get an early start at ITN's "cocktail soirée".
9.30pm: Perhaps the celebration that best reflects the choice facing the electorate is being hosted by the Adam Smith Institute. Their Victory For The Free Market Party isn't even going to have a TV screen relaying results — in their view the result is irrelevant.
9.45pm: John Birt's election bash kicks off at BBC Television Centre.
10pm: As the polling stations close, head to the Savoy for a three-course dinner in the Thames Foyer, with televised election coverage keeping diners up to date with the results as they come in. For £33 a head, you get the nosebag and a free glass of plonk.
10.15pm: First BBC exit poll predicted.
11pm: As the first results roll in, you could try and talk your way in to the Daily Telegraph party in Covent Garden, but you'd be better trying a pub. Many are negotiating late licences for election night.
Midnight: The first marginal seats will declare around the witching hour, so on to the Ritz for an election breakfast of salmon with Mediterannean prawns, chargrilled artichoke with basil, asparagus with vinaigrette, and veal in a wild mushroom sauce all for £35. The BBC are the broadcaster of choice.
1am: Tony Blair's Sedgefield constituency expected to declare
1.15am: Result expected from Yeovil, Paddy Ashdown's seat.
2-3am: The Prime Minister's constituency, Huntingdon, should declare along with the bulk of constituencies.
4am: Chucking-out time at ITN, but exhausted hacks can look forward to a champagne brunch at 8am on the morning of May 2.

Quiz answers

1. Eldrick.
2. A Labour Party political broadcast. Fearnot Winterwarmer is the Kennel Club name of Fitz the bulldog.
3. The Royal Automobile Club (RAC), which dropped the crown from its logo.
4. The Duchess of York, in her first newspaper column. She called Argentina her "second home" and wrote of her sadness at the death of her stepfather Hector Barrantes.
5. (a) The Natural Law Party. It also promised to establish "heaven on earth" and guarantee world peace through a "prevention wing" of yogic fliers.
6. Screaming Lord Sutch, who has withdrawn from the election to look after his ailing mother. Sutch, who heads the Monster Raving Loony Party ("Vote for Insanity: You Know It Makes Sense"), is Britain's longest-serving political leader
7. Types of butterfly: they have appeared a month earlier than usual because of the warm weather.
8. 14lb 3oz — the weight of an average four-month-old and one of the heaviest babies ever born in Britain.
9. The Spice Girls, whose record company Virgin defended their new book Girl Power! against accusations of bad language.
10. Karl Lagerfeld.
11. The British dependency of St Helena, where there has been constitutional wrangling and mob protests. As yet there have been no calls for Napoleon to return.
12. (c) Michael Browne. The painting, inspired by Piero della Francesca's The Resurrection, depicts Manchester United manager Alex Ferguson as Julius Caesar and Eric Cantona as Jesus Christ.
13. John Prescott to Sunday Times journalist A A Gill, though their respective recollections of the "truth" of the interview differed widely.
14. (c) BMW. Scotland Yard gave way and agreed to pay £100,000 to armour-plate his £150,000 Bentley.
15. (b) Sue Gee, for her gay novel The Hours Of The Night.

How you rate
0-4 Yogic flier
5-9 Butterfly
10-14 Bulldog
15 Tiger

Interview: Stella McCartney tells **Dina Rabinovitch** about fame, fashion, — oh, and dad

From riches to rags

PHOEBE's going to Paris when Stella starts her new job on Monday as chief designer for the House of Chloe. Now, though, Phoebe — whose lower back is tattooed with the words *sui generis* — is going to the loo the way the beautiful do in Antonioni films, without bothering to close the door. Finished, she drifts back towards the couch where Stella is sitting, says "hi" as she somewhat superfluously begins to zip up her satin jeans, before thinking better of that and pulling them right down so she can show Stella her new knickers, pale yellow lace with black inserts that go ping! — costing 30p if you happen to be passing through Thailand. "Oh, baby," Stella croons to Phoebe.

Welcome to haute bohemia: youth and freedom and style — all that money can't buy, and for which you can bet Karl Lagerfeld would sacrifice his sacred pony-tail. This is exactly what the House of Chloe want when the daughter of the man who wrote Yesterday moves into Lagerfeld's job at Chloe. She is the 25-year-old Stella McCartney, of whose appointment Lagerfeld said this week: "I think they should have taken a big name. They did — but in music, not fashion," adding, "Let's hope she is as gifted as her father."

This woman's been bitched at all her life, though, so it's no surprise that her home press too is scissoring at her, with couture grace. "How come her clothes don't fit" said the Daily Mail. Such criticism still makes her chiffon blue eyes momentarily pale. "I was a bit pissed off by some of it," Stella says, curled up on a dusty pink couch in her white-painted studio. She's wearing a skimpy black t-shirt, bright orange, but scuffed, draw-string PVC trousers and trainers without any socks. She has her father's fresh-faced prettiness and her own long strawberry blonde curls that she plays with constantly.

"I've grown up with it," she says. "Going to a normal school, not going to a private school, I was very aware of the English dislike of success. It was really, really character-building for me, because people don't like you just because of who your parents are. Whereas if I'd gone to a place where people suck up more to that kind of thing, I'd have gone through life not knowing there's this whole down side to success."

Did her parents tip her off at all? "Our family just lives, you know. It's like any dad to his daughter, 'If anything ever goes wrong, and you want to come home or you want a hug' — that's where my parents are coming from. It's not like, oh now, here's a lesson on how to cope with stuff, the press or whatever."

Then she adds, sounding particularly honest, "I think dad knows that I have a good feeling or how to deal with it all. At school it was always, the week they found out, having to walk down the corridor and people are pointing you out, and everything you say is 'oooh, she says . . .'

"I've always hated that, going into a room, and people instantly knowing something about me, before I know anything about anyone else. I just deal with it. It makes you more selective about friends. You don't take people all the way in. But maybe people do that anyway, I don't know.

"Do you do that?" she asks me suddenly. "I mean, I don't know what your father does." "He's a rabbi," I say.

"God, a rabbi?" she gasps. "God, I'm really into all that, rabbis. Wow."

For a second she seems startled, as natural and childlike as she would clearly like to be seen (opening the door to journalists carrying a bin-bag of rubbish to be put out, scurrying to put on make-up when the photographer arrives), or perhaps would really like to be. The only problem is, how can you be like that with two mega-famous parents?

She unwinds from the couch and goes across to the slinky, satin, stiletto-heeled knee-high boots lining the white walls of her studio. The electric blue boot with the gold braiding is sagging and she stuffs some padding back into it to make it stand tall.

"Can't bear that ..." she grins, wandering back.

And so she coasts on. Never mind the downside, she has a knack of turning her considerable advantages to her advantage. At her now celebrated graduate show (just two years ago at St Martin's) the models trotting down the catwalk in her clothes, plastered across the papers the next day, were Naomi Campbell, Kate Moss and Yasmin le Bon.

'Really cool' ... Stella McCartney who had the breathtaking confidence that is her birthright to turn down a job designing Chloe's younger line and go for the top job PHOTOGRAPH: EAMONN McCABE

"OK, at my degree show, that was my biggest worry, I wasn't worried about my collection, I was worried about the fact I was having all these big-name models and everybody's going to hate me. So you know, you don't do it because you know if you do everybody will slag you off — but then you're not doing it, and why shouldn't you? You haven't got a show, and you haven't got the memory.

"As far as people going, 'Oh she just knows those people because of her parents', well of course it's because of them and then you find yourself thinking, 'Do I just know everybody in my life because of who mum and dad are', and you just get so insecure about the thing — it's not cool. But I've always said, if my mum and dad were carpenters I'd know loads of people who are carpenters — in that world people would be jealous of me." This makes me laugh, and she manages to look a bit shamefaced.

'You find yourself thinking: do I just know everybody in my life because of who mum and dad are?'

"Well, OK, I'd know the Chippendales, really cool" and then she hurtles on: "It's just because people are so obsessed with show business — which is just another job after all. So then I said 'Fuck it, I'm just going to do it — use Naomi and Kate and Yasmin'. But I didn't tip off the press; I just told the tutors, 'I'm using my own models, and trust me, it's going to be great for St Martin's'.

"And actually it was a nightmare, because those girls, you never know if they'll be able to make it, but I called Katie — a real friend — months before and said, look, if you happen to be in London on June the whatever. Yasmin was great, she came for all the fittings, she's a cool chick, and Naomi, well I didn't know till the day before that Naomi was actually coming."

At which point her mobile phone trills and we break off for a session of "oh baby, oh Freddie" and stage whispers of "'cos you know who's in town tonight, so call me later at home, baby". All this gives me time to admire the huge green gilt mirror with the embossed M; the chandelier dripping with candy-coloured purple, pink, blue and yellow flowers; the lamp-shade base which is a goldfish bowl (the fish are called Sid and Nancy, but the water's crystal clear), not to mention the two wrought-iron railings of clothes (that's the lingerie-inspired strappy silk dresses, mixed with the Savile-Row inspired suiting, and the pair of maroon culottes — remember culottes? — which are there because Linda McCartney loves them) all hung on wooden hangers somebody's nicked from the Plaza Athenee, Paris.

Not many people know this (Stella didn't know herself till just the other day) but Chloe executives interviewed 41 other candidates before offering the job to her. First they had approached her about designing their younger line, and she thought about that, and then decided it would be too restricting. "You know, having to use cheaper fabrics, and that's not really where I'm coming from." So with the breathtaking confidence that is her birthright, she told them she'd be interested in doing their main line.

"They said, could you do it? And I said 'yes'." So they came back and offered it to her.

Then Phoebe's back, with crisps. "Oh, baby, dinner! Do you want some crisps? We just live off crisps," Stella says to me. Phoebe produces a sandwich. "Oh my god, bonus of a sandwich. Thank you." And munching her cheese and onions, this baby turns serious for a minute.

"The thing is, that I'm responsible now for all these people's livings; that's quite scary, because you know, I don't think Chloe's been bursting at the seams with orders at the moment. Obviously they want change, they want it better than it has been, so to be the person who's responsible for that: you want to make it good for the people who work there, exciting for the people who buy from them. I think it's really impressive of Chloe, taking me on — it's a risk, obviously, for both sides." McCartney is the third Briton to take Paris, following John Galliano (Dior) and Alexander McQueen (Givenchy). McQueen called her to say congratulations, and get her address to send flowers. Galliano hasn't contacted her yet, but she spoke to him a few nights ago to ask his advice. "About Paris, really, and the whole kind of deal: he was just saying, oh it's fine, just totally relaxed and mellow; McQueen was like, 'well, watch it', because he's obviously been given a bit of a rough ride."

That's next week. Today there will be a few more desultory calls, tonight there are drinks. There's nothing desultory about Stella McCartney though. She was born wealthy and famous, went on the road with her parents as an infant, and could have ended up on the pavement outside her west London studio drugged to the hilt. Instead, she's signed with a major fashion house.

She's working, and succeeding. How many rock stars' children could you say that about?

JEREMY HARDY

Don't you dare drive that child to school

AT the time of the last general election, I found myself railing against Labour's failure to make a big issue of education. It's easy to forget that the 1992 manifesto was an uninspiring and unconvincing document from a leadership which had dragged the party to the right and was appealing to patriotism in a rather desperate way.

I reckoned then that if they made a priority of education, they would reach many more people, people who would not mind paying more tax. But I realise now increasingly that education, as discussed by politicians, is boring. It is boring enough when discussed by parents.

Any readers who are not parents will agree that parents are terribly boring people. Thank God house prices have gone up again, so that our opening conversational gambits can range beyond: "What are the schools like in your area?"

In conversation with non-parents, we cut right across any opinion they put forward with "Well, I think it's different if you've got kids," by which we mean "Don't bore me with your childless nonsense; how can I respect someone like you?"

We invalidate the views of people who have lives of their own by saying: "I think it's hard for people without children to understand." It is not hard for them to understand; it is boring for them to understand. Key Stage One reading books are not that interesting. Not when compared to drinking all night and sleeping all next day.

If parents can't make education into an interesting topic for discussion, it's no wonder politicians can't. Even the Liberals, who are in the luxurious position of always being able to offer what they can't deliver, haven't been able to shift the election coverage on to the subject.

The only thing anyone will remember is that both main parties promised to sack incompetent teachers. Undoubtedly, there are incompetent teachers. There are also incompetent architects, plumbers, accountants, policemen, journalists, comedians and politicians.

Come to that, there are incompetent children, although I do not wish to encourage David Blunkett to introduce summer boot-camps for children who can't wipe themselves properly.

The big educational ideas with which the main parties hope to enthuse the electorate are purely negative. What Labour needs is a big, positive idea that places education in the context of progressive social change, rather than in a scary nether-world of incompetence, disruption and failure. The way to do it is to link education with an even more boring electoral topic: transport.

We are forever being told that we drive too much because we're all bad people who want everyone else to drive less so that we can drive more. Let's leave aside the fact that whenever TV reporters give us this line, they show footage of motorways covered almost entirely by commercial lorries. Let's leave aside the appalling sate of public transport. Let's talk about schools.

Let's talk about the parents whose main criterion in selecting a school is that it should involve the longest drivepossible. Mothers who feel they are letting their children down unless they spend every morning and afternoon blocking whole streets by double-parking huge Volvos with all the doors open. Let's work toward a society in which every child goes to the school that is nearest their home, and parents have no say in the matter.

Let's work toward a society in which every child goes to the school that is nearest their home whatever parents say

MOST lefties go through periods of political inactivity. It's not that we become disillusioned or cynical, we just get bogged down in decisions about fitted kitchens. So I'd like to remind people in this predicament that the decision itself can be a political act.

I am not referring to issues of tropical hardwoods or whether breakfast-bars are tested on animals, but to the old-fashioned and unmentionable matter of industrial relations. There is a dispute in Darlington involving 350 skilled workers, who were sacked by Magnet Kitchens Ltd. In August, two-thirds of the work-force voted for strike action in a postal ballot.

Magnet immediately issued an ultimatum to them to return to work within four days. Magnet then sent letters by taxi to all employees who were striking or on leave, asking them to sign the following declaration: "I hereby confirm that I do not sympathise, support or wish to take part in, nor do I intend at any time in the future to sympathise, support or take part in any of the industrial action currently being taken by the majority of the staff at Magnet Darlington."

When workers refused to sign and did not return to work, they were sacked. There is, therefore, an organised boycott of Magnet Kitchens, in support of the sacked workers. Donations to the Magnet Families Hardship Fund can be sent to 109, Jedburgh Drive, Darlington, Dl3 9UP.

There is a postscript to this: one of the area's MPs is Tony Blair. Shirley Winter of the Women's Support Group visited him to give him information about the dispute and try to enlist his support. Always keen to get his facts straight, he asked her to clarify something. His question was: "What do Magnet make?"

arts

British art is high on its own vulgarity. And it's all Margaret Thatcher's fault

Stuart Jeffries on the short-termist, marketing-obsessed shock artists

SHOOTING STARS

Rising: 'Mad' Frankie Fraser

Up . . . The celebrity psychopath and dentist releases an autobiography detailing his gruesome gangster crimes. It earns him over £50,000.
Up . . . A film of the book is mooted — Bob Hoskins, Gary Oldman and, um, Martin Kemp vie for the lead.
And Away . . . This week, 'Mad' Frank further rubbishes the suggestion that crime doesn't pay, crooning live at Shepherd's Bush with his new-found pal, trip-hopper Tricky.

Falling: Cast

Going . . . Average Noel-rock combo's new album gets average reviews. Have John Power (above) & chums lost their lustre?
Going . . . During a gig at Newcastle this week, one unruly Geordie casts a porcelain ashtray at Power's head. 'That ashtray was massive,' exaggerates the horrified songster.
Gone . . . Who says rock 'n' roll has lost its angry edge? The piqued popsters — 'It could have had my eye out!' — are threatening to boycott Newcastle altogether.

Whenever the vigour of British art in the nineties is trumpeted from the covers of patriotic glossies or cited by surprised American magazines, the same names, the same images crop up. Liam's two fingers. Silly Spice's trussed-up torso. Alexander McQueen's bare bottoms, a still from Trainspotting or its backward offspring Twin Town, Damien Hirst's viscera, Tracey Emin and Sarah Lucas's self-referential, sex-soaked oeuvres.

The same names, the same images and one dominant narrative: British art is high on its own vulgarity, tripping on its own coarseness; unable or unwilling to muster the patience necessary for quiet contemplation, or to allow space to those who want to evade its tyrannous, well-marketed rule.

Even the theatre wants to get in on the act. Playwrights, especially the young and the spunky, have become obsessed with bawling their self-conscious coarseness in their titles: Shopping And Fucking, Jeffrey Dahmer Is Unwell, I Licked A Slag's Deodorant, More E Vicar? (The last one remains to be written, but it is surely only a matter of time). And even when the titles are lessthan incendiary, writers self-frustratingly try to shock a jaded audience: in The Censor, currently at the Finborough in London, a woman squats and leaves what we hope is a plastic turd on the stage. Opera, not to be left out, had its ludicrous pneumatic Rhine-maidens, even though Bernard Haitink in the Covent Garden pit seemed less than impressed with this triumph of design over *gesamkunstwerk*.

This culture, though we must try to understand how it has arisen, is oppressive. It's one where television's response to new laddism is The Girlie Show. It's one where those who shout loudest, who plunder their lives for material most assiduously and basely, those who swear as though they've got Tourette's, are feted. But this culture is not so much Loaded as Spent, since there is a rapidly diminishing return to artistic shock tactics: boredom is now the only authentic emotion to be felt on experiencing most vulgar art, though feigned outrage is the most likely to be expressed.

How did this happen? How did vigorous vulgarity become the norm? A hint comes from a recent article by Mark Riding in the New York Times. He contended that Margaret Thatcher imposed a Darwinian order on the arts, forcing new creative talents to stand on their own. "By promoting economic policies that widened the gap between the rich and poor, she gave visual artists, movie-makers and playwrights something to protest about," says Riding.

There may indeed be a new Darwinian order, but it is not characterised by protest. Think of two of the most popular mutations on the British art scene, Damien Hirst and Tracey Emin. Successful in a Darwinian sense, one has gained fame from plundering the abbatoirs, the other from scouring her sexual history. To slice up a cow's carcass, to list one's lovers in a putative work of art, may indeed be shocking and vulgar, but makes for savvy pieces of easily marketed artworks. These are the true cultural products of Thatcherism.

Even though Thatcherite economic policies undoubtedly tore at the nation's social fabric, it's laughably reductive to say that the recent explosion in British artistic talent is to do with political protest. Take Oasis. Although, say, their song Bring It On Down starts sociologically enough: "You're the outcasts/ You're the underclass," the pay-off is: "But you don't care/ Because you're living fast." And, while Rock N Roll Star begins: "I live my life in the city, but there's no easy way out," the song reverts to self-serving posturing: "Tonight, I'm a rock 'n' roll star." Rock'n'roll has always been this way: the fast track from nowhere to somewhere, even if that somewhere is oblivion.

This is typical of a culture that the critic Robert Hewison has called "tragically hedonist", one that is too self-absorbed to protest, one that, chiefly for its own perceived psychic well-being, opts out of straight society into a doomed world of pleasure. "Society invents a spurious convoluted logic tae absorb and change people whae's behaviour is outside the mainstream," says a character in Irvine Welsh's novel Trainspotting. "Suppose that ah ken aw the pros and cons, know that ah'm gaunnae huv a short life, am ay sound mind etcetera, etcetera, but still want tae use smack? They won't let ye dae it, because it's seen as a sign ay thir failure." But the point about this, to the extent that it is a political protest, is that it is feeble.

This tragic hedonism can also be seen in house music or in more traditional pop bands such as Suede, where alienated decadence is all. Their current single, Lazy, pits working-class commitment against youthful enervation: "Uncle Teds and their legendary vests/ helping out around the disabled./ From the flats and the maisonette, they're reminding us there's things to be done./ But you and me all we want to be is lazy./ You and me, so lazy."

Paradoxically, such lyrics are of a piece with English literature's recent, anti-vulgarian and hermetic twist. Few readers could miss the tragic hedonism in John Lanchester's The Debt To Pleasure, winner of the Whitbread First Novel Prize. Equally alienated, equally bent on private pleasures, formidably superficial, Lanchester's gourmand hero Tarquin eats food fit for a fastidious aesthete. "In my black room, dressed in black velvet, black silk cravat — no need to change the inherent colour of the single orchid in my button hole — I would arrange for meals consisting of entirely black food: truffles grated over squid-ink pasta, followed by *boudin noir* on a bed of fried black radicchio."

Tarquin, indeed, can be seen as a member of the official opposition to the government of vulgarity invoking the ghosts of Wilde and Gautier, the prissy culture of refinement, at a time when coarseness on the streets, in the papers, in the galleries, on stage, is overwhelming.

But even to write this way seems fogeyish, snobbish. Avant garde art is necessarily transgressive, condemned to be misunderstood and reviled at first; and working-class expression is naturally disturbing to middle-class sensibilities. On the first point, no doubt it is true that much avant garde British art is reviled, but what is chiefly shocking about it is how limited its range of expression is, and how inoffensive, even dull, it is to experience.

On the second point, that criticising vulgarity is snobbish, the argument is this: vulgarity is a term used as a middle-class rebuke to working-class culture. Thatcher, so the New York Times story goes, drove the underclass to righteously express itself with all the verbal violence at its command. Hence any criticism of this violence is perceived as rightwing and repressive. It needn't be that way.

True, there is a rightwing critique of vulgarity, and not just in art. Symptomatic of this is a book published last year called Gentility Recalled: "Mere" Manners And The Making Of Social Order. Edited by Digby Anderson and published by the Social Affairs Unit, with all the horror that implies, the book is a conservative shopping list. Chapter headings include Being A Lady; The Protection Of Courtesy; Knowing Your Place; Running A Respectable Household.

In the book's foreword, Bryan Wilson, Emeritus Fellow of All Souls, writes disparagingly of the entertainment industry, advertising and the media: "Concern not to give offence, once a guiding maxim... has been replaced by the desire to shock, to dare and to be noticed. Primitive impulses are played upon and stimulated, and the feast of misrule, once the regulated and very occasional safety-valve of an ordered society, becomes the veritable (dis)order of the day. A modern play, novel, comedy sketch or broadcast makes almost mandatory use of what was once 'bad language'."

But this critique, which relies on a convincing diagnosis, calls for a return to values which many [illegible], however, it fails to take into account the historical circumstances that produced such a culture. One of those circumstances, as the New York Times realised, is the effect of Thatcherism — not just in unleashing a particular mode of commercially astute and vulgar expression, but in introducing a culture of short termism in the arts, where quick profits and cheap shocks are all. "Disengaged, uncommitted and preoccupied with liquidity, the financial system has been uniquely bad at supporting investment and innovation," writes Will Hutton in The State We're In. As for finance, so for art.

Even the trend of producing shocking art to do with the body becomes less able to shock as it becomes more like a decadent fixation. Sculptor Anthony-Noel Kelly may have been arrested on suspicion of stealing human remains for use in his work, but it is hard to get worked up about his project aesthetically. The Sunday Times may have ranted that "even in the avant garde world of 'shock art' there must surely be limits," but the point is not that there are limits, but that the constant transcending of them is jaded and jading.

What we need is a critique not so much of vulgarity, but of its ubiquity and its tyranny, one that understands Thatcherism's role in producing this coarseness, but also distinguishes vulgarity from "dumbing down", and one that expresses that the shock of vulgarity in 1997 is that it is no longer shocking. One that doesn't so much demand the smelling salts when vulgarity is proffered, but rather asks: "Is that all there is?"

WE ARE NOT AMUSED . . . Some of the decade's more printable shock-works include (from top, left to right) Jake and Dinos Chapman's Satyr, complete with penises for horns; the film of Irvine Welsh's Trainspotting, which was cleaned up a little for the stage adaptation, then a great deal more for the movie; the pneumatic Rhine maidens in the Royal Opera House's Ring Cycle, who wore rubber nude suits; Helen Chadwick with her Piss Flowers; and the work that started the balls rolling, Damien Hirst's Shark, which now looks rather tame

It was only the third hour-long episode of Coronation Street in 36 years. But it was worth every minute, says **Nancy Banks-Smith**

Carry On into the canal

Last night's TV

In a previous incarnation Amanda Barrie was Cleopatra in Carry On Cleo. She rose from her bath wearing those enormous eyes and very little else.

Last night in *Coronation Street* (ITV) a madman drove her into the Manchester Ship Canal. Life is much tougher in a soap, as Barbara Windsor will confirm.

This was only the third hour-long episode in 36 years. Alma was taken on a mad careering ride by the paranoid Don, who had lost everything, including his mind and his leg. It was the leg that worried me. Could he brake? As it happened, no.

This beautifully balanced script must have made EastEnders crack their knuckles in exasperation. It tick-tocked between the claustrophobia of the car and a roaring night out with the regulars at the Rovers. The more Don's mood plunged, the higher their spirits rose.

And all their jokes were at the expense of death.

Mavis, wispy, wistful and newly widowed, drifted in and out of the Rovers, embarrassing them like a small, damp patch. She was out of tune with their mood which was much more oompah.

"So," asked Alec, "you didn't like Derek's obsequies?" "I never went anywhere near them," screamed Audrey, who could go on as Doll Tearsheet without rehearsal. A Falstaff arrived, fat Fred Elliott, and the laughter grew meatier.

"There'll be no Rovers Return in the next world, will there?" said Audrey. "You've got a point there. I say she's got a point there," boomed Fred. "Eat, drink and be merry!"

Bill said he wouldn't mind dying in a pub. Dead or not, said Jack, he'd get chucked out at closing time. "I'm the landlord and I'll say when the towels go on," said Vera. The bar cheered. There is another kind of closing time and Vera was holding back the night.

Everybody's funeral arrangements were considered and derided. Jack said they'd have boiled beef and carrots at Percy's wake, like he used to give the troops. Percy, who was in the catering corps, said stiffly they did very well on it. Come off it, said Fred, he'd killed more than Rommel.

"Fill 'em up!" shouted Fred largely. "I'm thinking of having me wake before I die. Might as well enjoy me own funeral. Ashley can 'ang me on an 'ook in my freezer when t'time comes. I shall be as 'appy there as anywhere." "In Peru," said Bill, "they 'ang the dead bodies of their elders on mountain tops to decay. I don't know though . . . mebbe it's somewhere else."

"Southport?" suggested Gary.

They raised their pints to the generous provider. "To Fred! He died as he lived." "And none of us could tell the difference."

> 'So,' asked Alec, 'you didn't like Derek's obsequies?' 'I never went anywhere near them,' screamed Audrey

You could have balanced cups of custard on the gusty, boozy thermals of laughter.

This was defiance of the dark.

In the car the light went out of Don's eyes and the windows of his cab went black. He had driven Alma to waste land. "Despair," he said. "It's like a blackness all around me and I just can't see any future. There's no reason to get out of bed. I keep the curtains drawn. Nowt matters."

This excellent episode was filmed (Margaret Smith) written (Catherine Hayes) and directed (Kay Patrick) by women. Geoff Hinsliff's strong performance as Don was luridly lit by Jim Robson. Never let anyone light you from below. You mother will run away screaming.

Just one thing. Cadbury's, which sponsor Coronation Street, has cheapened it by turning it into chocolate. Every episode is opened and closed by chocolate men and chocolate cats and dogs. Last night, as the car leaped into the canal and the water closed over Don and Alma, chocolate pigeons went "Coo!"

I want you all to go out now and kick a chocolate cream egg.

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CHANNEL SURFING
STUART JEFFRIES

Living dead

At the British Museum currently is an extraordinary exhibition called Ancient Faces: Mummy Portraits from Roman Egypt. T S Eliot once wrote admiringly of John Webster that he showed the skull beneath the skin, but these pictures do the reverse: they depict the faces that existed nearly 2,000 years ago, and rest above the skulls of mummified remains. Painted on little panels of wood, these pictures — of young children, adults fixed for ever in chic Roman styles, men and women represented in their mortal illnesses, long-dead beauties with soulful brown eyes — were mostly painted shortly after their subject's deaths.

But the most potent image is a modern one, a three-minute video made at University College London that attempts to recreate scientifically how a young Greek grammar teacher called Hermione looked when alive. Next to the TV that shows the video are her mummified remains, topped by a contemporary painting of Hermione's face made soon after her death. Sectional CAT scans made of the mummified skull were used to form a database that allowed the construction of a three-dimensional computer image of her head that rotates slowly, uncannily.

At one point her eyes meet yours before her head rotates off once more into profile. One feels one is looking across the ages to how this woman looked then, and part of the pleasure consists in comparing the painted portrait with the computer-generated image and wondering where the truthful image lies: one also feels, perhaps fancifully, that Hermione has been brought back to fragile life, a wan, high-cheekboned woman with brown eyes, suddenly alive and hopelessly dislocated in a 20th-century exhibition.

The power of computer imaging to bring death to life was also made forcefully clear on Titanic: Anatomy Of A Disaster (Discovery), a two-hour special to commemorate the 85th anniversary of the sinking of the ocean liner. A computer simulation of the ship drifted across the virtual Atlantic, its convivial lights glowing across the sea and night sky, before the virtual iceberg struck the fatal glancing blow to the hull. The simulation was somewhat crude and yet sufficiently effective, even without representing any of the 1,500 people who died that night, to vividly convey the tragedy. Here, once more, death — the rotting ship at the bottom of the ocean bed — was brought to life in an uncanny way.

About 5,000 artefacts have been salvaged from the Titanic. We saw one conservator working painstakingly on restoring the rotting wooden base to the ship's compass; another chemically washed corrosive sea water from a cracked figurine, one of the passenger's souvenir from Holland, with the aim of exhibiting it to show how the damage done by time and ocean, but to preserve it from any further decay.

We saw one conservator unpacking clothes from a passenger's suitcase, clothes folded neatly for a trip to America 85 years ago, a pair of check trousers that have lain on the ocean bed unworn for generations. What peculiar fate, to have one's sea-mauled clothes unpacked by a stranger long after one's death! What a delicate and delicately disturbing conservation project for the woman we saw carefully washing off ocean detritus from an Edwardian jacket!

Leather suitcases protected their perishable contents from total destruction: as a result conservators have been able to work on letters ("I'm just living from day to day for the time you will be back. I could not be untrue, even if I wanted to.") and pieces of music retrieved from two and a half miles underwater.

This offered a different way of thinking about the dead. Computer imaging, at best, can create the spectral simulacra of the dead which certainly, yet surprisingly, have an emotional effect on the spectator. But the artefacts from the ocean bed are just as uncanny, once used unthinkingly by our nearly forgotten ancestors, now soaked in poignant meaning.

WAVE RIDING
ANNE KARPF

Nuns on the run

Actress Fiona Shaw's forte is scrubbed, impassioned, androgynous characters, so the prospect of her spending two weeks as a novice nun didn't cause any Richter-scale sense of shock — as it might have if, say, Helen Mirren had volunteered for the role.

She recorded her thoughts in Taking The Veil (Radio 4), an unscripted audio diary and always a difficult form: you're clearly talking into a mike, anticipating a listening audience, yet still maintain the fiction of personal confession, as if scribbling into a Woolworths exercise book. Shaw is Irish, and not so much a lapsed Catholic, it seems, as a would-like-to-be-better one: the first half of Taking The Veil was full of devotional yearning, as Shaw aspired to equal the sisters in disembodied piety. This was a mite tedious, as well as disingenuous. The whole point of taking orders is the irrevocability of the decision, the precise aspect missing from any such simulation.

There were a few nice observations. Shaw relished the fact that the ascetic Benedictine convent was almost directly opposite the £750-a-night Dorchester Hotel in Hyde Park. And she discovered that the last time the nuns had permission to listen to the radio was the Royal Wedding (gosh, the thought struck, they might assume that the royal couple were still blissfully united, or at least that Di was still shy). But mostly, amid the endless kneeling, there was a self-flagellating solemnity and more than a dash of cultural tourism.

Then it changed. When Shaw became less awed and more critical — noting, for example, that many of the sisters looked bored — the programme took off, with wit (a nun was having "a bad veil day") and perceptiveness (was their sexual energy sublimated into skipping?). She was sharp on sex, noting how nuns use the language of secular love (the bride of Christ, etc) but stop short at the point of erotic consummation. After this burst of testiness, her ultimate respect for the sisters — celibacy, impromptu kneeling, and all — seemed somehow less idealised and more achieved.

Dirk Maggs has struck again. The chap who brought us the ace audio Superman, Spiderman and other radio cartoons, who fashions audio soundtracks to match cinematic ones, has adapted John Landis's An American Werewolf In London for Radio 1. Currently playing in three-minute episodes on Mary Anne Hobbs's show and issued simultaneously on BBC cassette, this has made-for-cultishness written all over it. Two Americans backpacking on the Yorkshire Moors are attacked, and one of them frenziedly killed, by a werewolf. To a nicely dry script, larded with dramatic irony, Maggs piles on the aural gore and Gothic kitsch (spooky music, heavy-breathing, and kindergarten wild roaring), with guaranteed climaxes every three minutes. 3-D radio.

Talk Radio's welcome, serious day on disability ended on the other side of prurience in James Whale's programme on disability and sex. You could chuckle at the ex-model who'd lost a leg revealing with gusto that "my boyfriend massages my stump all the time", and frankly admire the mother complaining about nursing staff too disapproving to help her disabled son put on a condom, but increasingly — under Whale's steering — candid talk veered into exhibitionism.

Election PS: for years politicians have been trained in media skills, so ridding their speech of hesitancy and uncertainty that they sound totally unlike real people. (Paddy Ashdown is a major offender.) The canny politician would go on a course to reinsert the ums, ahs, and don't knows of real speech. At the moment, almost the only people on radio speaking authentically unfluent, or trying to, are actors.

CultureShop

Love in a Blue Time

"Deflatingly funny"
Maya Jaggi, The Guardian

Fans of Hanif Kureishi, author of The Buddha of Suburbia and The Black Album will not be disappointed by this collection of stories, taking his generation towards middle age, charting desire, its failings and renewal, hunting, as he puts it, "the one who will make the difference".

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The Guardian

You can smell the straw and greasepaint in Peter Lavery's circus pictures, says **John Vidal**

Khalil Ogtiaby, an Iranian strongman in Gerry Cottle's circus, and, below, Ruslan Dauzbekov, who rode with the Moscow State Circus and was killed by a rival Cossack faction

Tales from the Big Top

The high-flyer

Whatever happened to Circus Europa? I dropped on this family of Hungarian exiles in the early 1980s in a small field on the Welsh borders where they wintered in a caravan park. Or rather they dropped on me.

Johnny and his dad were shouting at each other as, one man on each handle, they winched up their single-pole tent for the first show of the season. They were so angry that they couldn't concentrate and the canvas kept falling down around us. Their watching wives were doubled up in laughter. Eventually the joke overtook the argument and we all went for tea in a caravan.

Johnny taught me to smell circus, feel its rough edges and understand its rivalries, but above all to respect the sheer gruelling, sweating hardness of a tribe where people willingly wreck their bodies for self-expression. And to see the absolute ordinariness of some of the most interesting people on earth.

The photographer Peter Lavery doesn't record Circus Europa, though the spirit of Johnny — who was obsessed with buying a kangaroo and used to play the trumpet standing on his head while his dad threw knives at his wife and his mum juggled balls with her legs — lives in his photographs. Knifemen, dwarves, contortionists, strongmen, aerialists, showmen and acrobats, mostly from the smaller circuses, people his pages. They are as diverse as deepwater fishes — odd shapes for odd souls.

Lavery's portraits are formal, Victorian even, and reflect and befit the huge pride in performance and the iron discipline needed to perform extraordinary skills each night. The short — too short — stories that accompany them are from the far side, most often tinged with a gallows humour or a sense of circus as a metaphor for much wider events.

There's Martin, about to put his head in a lion's mouth when his kneecap slips. He has to put it back even as the teeth surround him; the Bulgarian Antoaneta Becheva who brushes her hair 150 times a night to be able to hang by it; Enos with his exploding car; Ruslan the Cossack bear, killed by a rival faction in the Russian upheavals; Lucy, the solicitor who ran away to do a trapeze act; Captain Soyuz, the human cannonball who was fired too far, missed the net and landed on his head. There are terrible tales of bikini tops falling, legs snapping like carrots and disasters on the high wire.

For Lavery, the Yorkshire miner's son behind dozens of instantly recognisable advertising campaigns (remember his award-winning Marlboro Motorbike photographs?), Circus Works is the culmination of a 25-year fascination. He is a visual anthropologist, who expresses in images how the brief glitter and finery of the ring is set against a backcloth of threadbare resources and sewn again sequins. His pictures are a salute to the performers, a tribe which moves always on the edge of the social forest.

Johnny got his kangaroo. He paid £500 for three-foot tall Skippy and boxed with him all over England. Years later, the RSPCA was called to stop the fights. They took one look and referred Johnny's case to the RSPCC. Skippy had grown into a six-foot bruiser and used to thump the daylights out of his owner every night. Even then, Johnny loved circus. It was all he knew, all he wanted. Lavery would understand that.

Circus Work is at the Royal Photographic Society, Bath, till June 1. The accompanying book is published by Hand Held Books at £35.

There is a pretender to Darcey Bussell's throne: Sarah Wildor. **Judith Mackrell** reviews two remarkable Juliets

Different strokes

The double-act

Sarah Wildor and Darcey Bussell couldn't offer more different physical images of Juliet — one blonde and delicate, bruised by the brawling politics around her, the other tall and dark, and wrapped in a kind of inviolate space. When you actually see them perform on consecutive nights, what's striking is not so much the different ways they act out Juliet's tragedy, but the contrasting ways in which their dancing creates the reality of her world.

Bussell's control of her long, long body is now remarkable, moulding phrases of dance with a grandeur that makes MacMillan's choreography seem to hum and grow. But this control also allows her to dominate the stage so forcefully that she seems to own the air around her. And it's often the way in which she moves within that private pocket of space that defines crucial apsects of Juliet's character.

For instance, when she's first touched by Paris the shock she registers is not exactly sexual, but that of someone whose personal territory has been trespassed on. So virginal is this reserve that when she locks eyes with Romeo, the invitation is amazing — even though her body still holds back. And when they dance the force of her emotion becomes exhilaratingly clear as she flies, outstretched on his shoulders, the two of them soaring through space together.

By contrast, Wildor's inner Juliet is revealed through the speed of her dancing. With her quick, bright footwork and exquisitely fluid arms she's initially a child, impatient to shake off heavy adult demands. When she dances with Romeo it's as if she is throwing aside a straitjacket, and has found a match for her energy. But when her Juliet gets sucked into the plot's tragic spiral that energy takes on a frantic quality and, appalled by her inability to act, she quivers, close to madness. Bussell in the same scenes holds desperately on to a core of stillness — as if she's pulled her private space inside her heart. While she goes out with her eyes fixed on heaven, Wildor goes out battling with her demons.

Of course, we read these Juliets through their partners too, who are equally differrent. Stuart Cassidy's Romeo is one of the lads, and the fact that his hormones dominate his heart makes Wildor's Juliet apear even more stranded in her despair. Igor Zelensky (dancing the role for the first time) is a poet. His huge jumps and plushy turns are metaphors for romance rather than high spirits, and he's more than ready to abandon the boys' world for Bussell's. If at times his acting lacks heat, the power of his partnering gives Juliet passion enough.

Two other performances also put a new spin on the ballet, the first being Tetsuya Kumakawa's irrepressibly flash Mercutio. This isn't normally danced as a virtuoso role, but when Kumakawa whips up an insolent dazzle of pirouettes right under Tybalt's nose, then slows it down to a mocking drawl, you can feel exactly how Tybalt's sword is itching to run him through. The second was David Pickering's Paris. Possibly the prettiest in years, this Paris is also a spoilt and hysterical bully. When he smacks Juliet around to force her acquiescence to marriage we get a glimpse of just how mean he'd be when crossed. We may cry when Wildor stabs herself to death, but we're relieved that she's escaped a lifetime of Paris's nasty bedroom manners.

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Death & Fame

By Allen Ginsberg
1926-1997

When the founding poetic spirit of America's Beat generation died two weeks ago today he left this affectionate tribute to friends and lovers who he entrusted with making his funeral a memorable event

"AT ALLEN'S, MARCH 16 1997" BY GEORGE CONDO

When I die
I don't care what happens to my body
throw ashes in the air, scatter 'em in East River
bury an urn in Elizabeth New Jersey, B'nai Israel Cemetery
But I want a big funeral
St Patrick's Cathedral, St Mark's Church, the largest synagogue in Manhattan
First, there's family, brother, nephews, spry aged Edith stepmother 96, Aunt Honey from old Newark,
Doctor Joel, cousin Mindy, brother Gene one eyed one ear'd, sister-in-law blonde Connie, five nephews, stepbrothers & sisters their grandchildren,
companion Peter Orlovsky, caretakers Rosenthal & Hale, Bill Morgan —
Next, teacher Trungpa Vajracharya's ghost mind, Gelek Rinpoche there, Sakyong Mipham, Dalai Lama alert, chance visiting America, Satchitananda Swami
Shivananda, Dehorahava Baba, Karmapa XVI, Dudjom Rinpoche, Katagiri & Suzuki Roshi's phantoms
Baker, Whalen, Daido Loorie, Qwong, frail white-haired Kapleau Roshis, Lama Tarchin —
Then, most important, lovers over half century
Dozens, a hundred, more, older fellows bald & rich
young boys met naked recently in bed, crowds surprised to see each other, innumerable, intimate, exchanging memories
"He taught me to meditate, now I'm an old veteran of the thousand day retreat — "
"I played music on subway platforms, I'm straight but loved him he loved me"
"I felt more love from him at 19 than ever from anyone"
"We'd lie under covers, gossip, read my poetry, hug & kiss belly to belly arms round each other"
"I'd always get into his bed with underwear on & by morning my skivvies would be on the floor"
"Japanese, always wanted take it up my bum with a master"
"We'd talk all night about Kerouac & Cassady sit Buddhalike then sleep in his captain's bed"
"He seemed to need so much affection, a shame not to make him happy"
"I was lonely never in bed nude with anyone before, he was so gentle my stomach
shuddered when he traced his finger along my abdomen nipple to hips —"
"All I did was lay back eyes closed, he'd bring me to come with mouth & fingers along my waist"
"He gave great head"
So there be gossip from loves of 1946, ghost of Neal Cassady commingling with flesh and youthful blood of 1997
and surprise — "You too? But I thought you were straight!"
"I am but Ginsberg an exception, for some reason he pleased me,"
"I forgot whether I was straight gay queer or funny, was myself, tender and affectionate to be kissed on the top of my head,
my forehead throat heart & solar plexus, mid-belly, on my prick, tickled with his tongue my behind"
"I loved the way he'd recite 'But at my back I always hear/Time's winged chariot hurrying near,' heads together, eye to eye, on a pillow —"
Among lovers one handsome youth straggling the rear
"I studied his poetry class, 17-year-old kid, ran some errands to his walkup flat,
seduced me didn't want to, made me come, went home, never saw him again never wanted to. . ."
"He couldn't get it up but loved me," "A clean old man," "He made sure I came first"
This the crowd most surprised proud at ceremonial place of honor —
Then poets & musicians — college boys' grunge bands — age-old rock star Beatles, faithful guitar accompanists, gay classical conductors, unknown high jazz music composers, funky trumpeters, bowed bass & french horn black geniuses, folksingers fiddlers with dobro tambourine harmonica mandolin autoharp pennywhistles & kazoos
Next, artist Italian romantic realists schooled in mystic 60s India, late fauve Tuscan painter-poets, Classicdraftsman Massachusetts surreal jackanapes with continental wives, poverty sketchbook gesso oil watercolor masters from American provinces
Then high-school teachers, lonely Irish librarians, delicate bibliophiles, sex liberation troops nay armies, ladies of either sex
"I met him dozens of times he never remembered my name I loved him anyway, true artist"
"Nervous breakdown after menopause, his poetry humor saved me from suicide hospitals"
"*Charmant*, genius with modest manners, washed sink dishes, my studio guest a week in Budapest"
Thousands of readers, " 'Howl' changed my life in Libertyville Illinois"
"I saw him read Montclair State Teachers College decided be a poet —"
"He turned me on, I started with garage rock sang my songs in Kansas City"
" 'Kaddish' made me weep for myself & father alive in Nevada City"
" 'Father Death' comforted me when my sister died Boston 1982"
"I read what he said in a newsmagazine, blew my mind, realised others like me out there"
Deaf & Dumb bards with hand signing quick brilliant gestures
Then journalists, editors' secretaries, agents, portraitists & photography aficionados, rock critics, cultured laborers, cultural historians come to witness the historic funeral
Super-fans, poetasters, aging Beatniks & Deadheads, autograph-hunters, distinguished paparazzi, intelligent gawkers
Everyone knew they were part of "History" except the deceased
who never knew exactly what was happening even when I was alive
(*February 22, 1997*)

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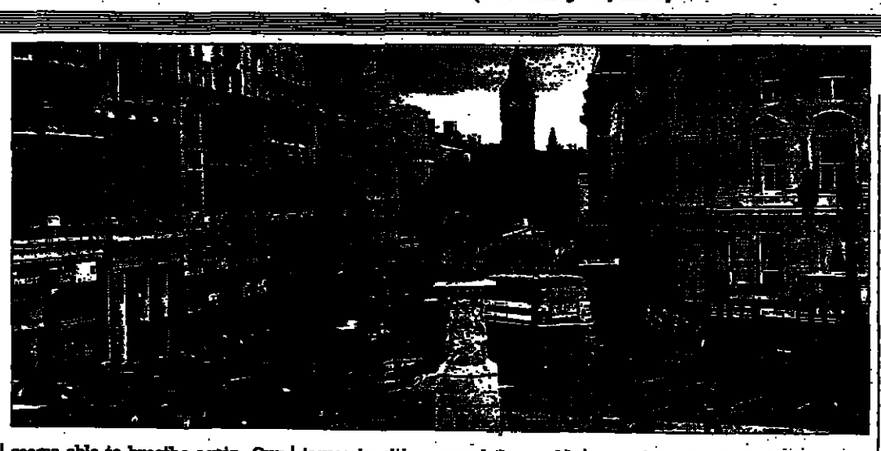
The new golden city

Sir Norman Foster explains how to change the heart of London into a space for real people



Traffic jam at Trafalgar Square looking towards Parliament: under Sir Norman's plan this could be a thing of the past

THE London of the postcards is the nucleus of Britain, the most precious site in the land: the Palace of Westminster and the Abbey form one of London's only two World Heritage sites and the area around boasts 170 listed buildings.

Of the 23 million people (three times the resident population) who visit London every year, 80 per cent are drawn to Westminster, around Parliament and Trafalgar Squares, where a network of superb buildings, landmarks, public spaces and ceremonial routes symbolises our government, religion and monarchy.

Yet the innate harmony of Westminster is today invisible. Although pockets are well known and loved, the pieces do not fit together, severed by traffic arteries. There are more barriers than links. Sadly, the settings for some of the finest buildings are so appalling that they cannot be appreciated. To ignore the paucity of space and allow traffic to rush past them is a national disgrace.

I know what creating the right setting for a building can mean. A few years ago, we were asked to look at a site in the centre of Nîmes next to the Maison Carrée — a perfectly preserved Roman temple. It was a decayed area with forbidding railings facing on to the site of a burnt-out opera house, used only as a car park.

We created a major new public space between our building and the temple, and re-paved throughout. Now that it is fully respected, and co-existent with a lively civic domain, the historic building seems able to breathe again. Our urban projects in Europe, such as the Reichstag in Berlin, have taught us to balance historical and practical viewpoints.

From London's buildings, like the British Museum or the Royal Academy, we have learned how subtle contemporary insertions bring out their essential value, and how you can strip away recent accretions and add new elements which reinforce the past. London does not need some grand draconian plan, but it does need sensitive interventions — to make it more welcoming and enjoyable for living in and visiting.

Over the years I have worked with a small group of motivated people, and early last year we formed an informal think tank because I was absorbed in planning issues in cities around the world. When Westminster city council announced the World Parliament for All competition, we were excited.

In the brief were all the questions which had stimulated us: access, safety, information, urban design, and the setting of historic buildings around Parliament and Trafalgar Squares. The opportunity to make this area more comfortable for visitors and residents — to extend pedestrian areas and highlight links, to celebrate our parks and Thames-side gardens and to open up some of the more hidden spaces would be a dream come true.

Early in the project, Halcrow Fox surveyed traffic, monitoring density, examining possible alternative routes and questioning motorists about their journeys. Space Syntax made the most detailed survey ever of pedestrian movement in Westminster.

The movements of people — both tourists and locals — were discreetly tracked to establish where they were going and by which routes, how long they spent moving, standing still, waiting at traffic lights and crossing roads. Long delays and near-accidents at road crossings were rife.

I have lived in London for most of the 34 years since I was a student and the greatest luxury is still to spend weekends walking. But for me — and other team members — it was a revelation to walk routes in our own city as if we were not residents, to follow the tourist trails. The experience was not totally pleasurable, with few places to rest or take refreshment: the absence of local knowledge was not helped by the fact that most signs are scaled for motorists.

Many of the area's most interesting pedestrian routes are little employed or out of bounds and used for parking. Around Whitehall, short-cuts through courtyards and side-streets have been closed off. Twenty years ago you could walk from Parliament Square, through the Treasury, across King Charles Street, through the Foreign Office and into Downing Street. Today's visitors may only use the main roads, unaware of the delightful courtyards within the heart of many public buildings in the area.

Some restrictions are essential to security. But practical changes afoot could allow greater public access to wonderful spaces presently hidden. With bureaucracy's migration to other urban centres and moves towards greater transparency in public life, parts of Westminster's public buildings and surrounds could be considered for a more interesting mixture of uses, including all-too-rare resting places and cafés.

All our proposals must achieve an equilibrium. In Westminster, the everyday and the ceremonial sit side by side, as do culture and commerce, government and tourism. Yet we must do more for the deprived pedestrian. More pedestrian access must be balanced against security, local benefits weighed against the general needs of London. If traffic is to be excluded or reduced, then alternative routes or transport must be offered, with access for deliveries and emergency services. This will affect traffic flows in the study area and the districts around it.

Our aim is to bring forth the qualities, both grand and modest, which have, over time, created this part of Westminster. We have asked for, and listened to, the opinions of over 100 official bodies and interest groups — including motoring and transport organisations, pedestrians' and cyclists' associations, the police, action groups for the disabled, groups involved in conservation and local history, embassies, cultural and religious institutions, businesses and residents' associations.

The next stage is widespread public consultation in June and July. Once the public's views have been taken on board, a final masterplan will be prepared. The aim is to make substantial parts of the plan a reality by 2000. We want to deliver imaginative ideas for design of the highest quality — this, in the end, is what will transform the quality of the environment.

I've seen great enthusiasm for change at the presentations we have made and, in the informal exchanges after meetings, have been encouraged by people saying "be sensitive — but don't compromise" or, simply, "go for gold"! We understand the sensitivity required if gold is to be achieved. That essential balance, and gold, is our aim.

Newbury with TV form

	RON COX	TOP FORM
2.00	Myrtle Quest	Hardy Dancer
2.30	Samraan	Ela-Aristokrati
3.00	The West	Revoque (nap)
3.30	Sky Dome	Hawksley Hill
4.00	Chrysalis	Arian Da
4.30	Chief Monarch	Alezal
5.00	Sophomore	King Sound
5.30	Mamalik	Rainwatch

Left-handed, mile and seven furlongs track with a run-in of five furlongs. Good galloping track.
Going: Good to Firm. ★ Denotes blinkers. ● Top form rating.
Draw: No advantage.
Long distance travellers: 3.30 Hunters Of Brora, J Bethell, N Yorks, 237 miles; 3.30 Hawksley Hill, Mrs J Ramsden, N Yorks, 232 miles; 3.30 Kala Sunrise, C Smith, Lincs, 143 miles.
Seven day winners: None.
Figures in brackets after horse's name denote days since last outing

2.00 GRUNDON RECYCLE HANDICAP
1m 2f 6yds £6,353 (22 declared) — BBC1

[illegible]

2.30 LANES END JOHN PORTER STAKES
1m 4f 5yds £20,940 (13 declared) — BBC1

[illegible]

3.00 TRIPLEPRINT GREENHAM STAKES 3YO
7f £19,500 (6 declared) — BBC1

[illegible]

3.30 LADBROKES SPRING CUP (HANDICAP) (CLASS B)
1m 7yds £18,075 (20 declared) — BBC1

[illegible]

4.00 NETHERAVON MEDIAN AUCTION MAIDEN FILLIES' STAKES 2YO
5f 34yds £3,818 (12 declared)

[illegible]

4.30 BOB RILEY 50TH BIRTHDAY MAIDEN STAKES (DIV 1) 3YO
1m £3,428 (17 declared)

[illegible]

5.00 ARLINGTON INTERNATIONAL RACECOURSE CONDITIONS STAKES 3YO
1m 2f 6yds £7,962 (10 declared)

[illegible]

5.30 BOB RILEY 50TH BIRTHDAY MAIDEN STAKES (DIV 2) 3YO
1m £3,428 (16 declared)

[illegible]

COURSE SPECIALISTS

[illegible]

Newbury darling . . . Dance Parade powers home in yesterday's big race PHOTOGRAPH: FRANK BARON

Go West for Greenham

Ron Cox

AFTER a largely confusing week of Classic trials, a resounding victory by Revoque in today's Tripleprint Greenham Stakes at Newbury would restore a semblance of order.

But, it has to be said, the omens are not good for last season's top two-year-old retaining his unbeaten record.

Pronounced "quite unfit" by his trainer Peter Chapple-Hyam, Revoque is a lazy worker at home and there was little encouragement from his galloping companion Monza at Newmarket earlier this week.

Paul Cole, on the other hand, could not be happier with his colt, The West, and with stablemate Dance Parade having shown the way yesterday don't be surprised to find the form book turned upside down again.

The West was beaten three lengths by Revoque at Longchamp last September, but paid the price for setting a suicidal pace with Zamindar, the eventual third.

Highly regarded by his trainer, The West started third favourite for the Dewhurst Stakes next time but again things didn't go his way.

In a muddling race he refused to settle and, after being hampered entering the final furlong, could only finish seventh to In Command.

Even so, The West was not beaten far and he left the impression he might make a better three-year-old than In Command. Muchea, who had In Command a length behind him when second in the Middle Park Stakes, and Yalaietanee are also engaged in the 2,000 Guineas.

Punters face a difficult choice but The West (3.00) should be spot on for this — and defeat for Revoque would not necessarily rule him out of the Guineas reckoning.

Cole should also have a say in the outcome of the John Porter Stakes with his brave front-runner Salmon Ladder.

But the expected strong gallop can play into the hands of Frankie Dettori, who teams up with last season's St Leger third Samraan (2.30).

Ayr puts on a tip-top jumps card, although this does not look a vintage Scottish Grand National.

The each-way bet could be Fiveleigh Builds (4.05) who ran better than his final placing suggests behind Unguided Missile at Aintree, where he chased the winner to three out.

Although trainer Lucinda Russell is going through a lean spell, Fiveleigh Builds holds his form well.

Narrowly beaten over three and a half miles at Kelso, Fiveleigh Builds should stay the marathon trip.

An 18lb rise in the weights puts Shadow Leader (3.25) nicely in the frame for the Scottish Champion Hurdle, and Celestial Choir (2.25) makes considerable appeal after her impressive display at Wetherby.

Sleepytime idle on parade

Graham Rock

SLEEPYTIME lived up to her name with a lacklustre run in the Dubai Duty Free Fred Darling Stakes at Newbury yesterday, finishing only fourth to Dance Parade.

Henry Cecil's filly, odds-on yesterday and for months the ante-post favourite for the 1,000 Guineas, will need to improve dramatically to win the first fillies' Classic.

True, the race was not run to suit her. She was settled midfield by Kieren Fallon and the early pace was pedestrian. When the tempo quickened she proved flat-footed but she stayed on to finish fourth, less than three lengths behind the winner. All too often bookmakers react with the originality of herd animals, but on this occasion the result threw them into confusion.

Corals retained Sleepytime at the head of the market, at 3-1 from 9-4, but Ladbrokes and Hills knocked her out to 5s.

The Tote have removed her from their list on the assumption that, in addition to yesterday's beaten favourite, Cecil has both Reams Of Verse and Yashmak entered for the Guineas, and he might give Sleepytime more time to find her form.

"The race went badly for her," said the trainer. "She couldn't get out and when she did she was hopeless." When asked if Sleepytime would contest the 1,000 Guineas a fortnight tomorrow, he said: "I don't know. We haven't really thought any further than today."

Ladbrokes and Hills (both 7-2) have the Godolphin filly Moonlight Paradise as their new favourite, with Criquette Head's Pas de Reponse second best. Dance Parade is a best-priced 14-1 with Ladbrokes and the Tote while Seebe, beaten three-quarters of a length here, is 25-1 with Ladbrokes.

In pulling out Seebe to challenge, Frankie Dettori's mount interfered with the beaten Bianca Nera, and the man who is odds-on to regain his jockeys' title this season was suspended for two days, April 27 and 28.

Thirsk runners and riders

	RON COX	TOP FORM
2.20	Flea In Your Ear	My Bet
2.50	Surprise Mission (nb)	Stuffed
3.20	Jhazi	Soviet State
3.50	Nile Valley	Desert Fighter
4.20	Starborough	Starborough
4.50	Bewitching Lady	Hazel
5.20	Best Of All	Angel Face

Left-handed track of just over a mile and a quarter. There is a straight six furlongs.
Going: Good To Firm - Good In Places. ★ Denotes blinkers.
Draw: High best in sprints.
Long distance travellers: 4.50 Hazel, Miss G Kelleway, Dorset, 295 miles; 2.20 Carnation King, W Turner, Somerset, 272 miles; 3.20 Watch Me & 3.50 Fairy Knight, R Hannon, Wilts, 242 miles; 3.20 Soviet State, 3.50 Nile Valley & 5.20 Chorus Song, P Chapple-Hyam, 232 miles.
Seven day winners: 5.20 Angel Face.
Blinkered for the first time: 2.20 Captain Bliss, Diamond Steve.
Figures in brackets after horse's name denote days since last outing

2.20 KNAYTON CLAIMING STAKES 2YO
5f £2,653 (12 declared)

[illegible]

2.50 THOMAS LORD HANDICAP
5f £7,668 (21 declared)

[illegible]

3.20 MICHAEL FOSTER MEMORIAL CONDITIONS STAKES
6f £6,509 (8 declared)

[illegible]

3.50 RACING CHANNEL LIMITED STAKES
1m 4f £2,880 (8 declared)

[illegible]

4.20 THIRSK CLASSIC TRIAL CONDITIONS STAKES 3YO
1m £10,486 (3 declared)

[illegible]

4.50 BYLAND RATING RELATED MAIDEN STAKES
7f £2,723 (11 declared)

[illegible]

5.20 LEVY BOARD FILLIES' HANDICAP
1m £3,730 (15 declared)

[illegible]

COURSE SPECIALISTS

[illegible]

Ayr with TV form

	RON COX	TOP FORM
1.55	Sousse	Sousse
2.25	Celestial Choir (nap)	Celestial Choir
2.55	Sparky Gayle	Sparky Gayle
3.25	Shadow Leader	Shadow Leader
4.05	Fiveleigh Builds	Sister Stephanie
4.40	Bollegio	Golden Hello
5.10	Samuel Wilderspin	Samuel Wilderspin
5.40	Benvenuto	Normania

Left-handed track of one and a half miles
Going: Good. ★ Denotes blinkers. ● Top form rating
Long distance travellers: 4.05 Spuffington, 4.40 No Pain No Gain, J Gifford, West Sussex, 431 miles; 1.55 Muhtadi, 5.40 Rasak, Lady Herries, West Sussex, 431 miles, 3.25 I'm Supposin, R Rowe, West Sussex, 425 miles; 2.55 Sound Statement, 5.40 Normania, Miss S Edwards, West Sussex, 421 miles.
Seven day winners: 4.05 Act The Wag.
Blinkered for the first time: 1.55 Shu Gaa; 4.05 Buckhouse Boy, Killeshin; 4.40 No Pain No Gain.

1.55 ALBERT BARTLETT AND SONS NOVICE HANDICAP HURDLE
2m £4,403 (7 declared)

[illegible]

2.25 HAMLET EXTRA MILD CIGARS GOLD CARD HANDICAP HURDLE
2m 6f £8,870 (11 declared)

[illegible]

2.55 EDINBURGH WOOLLEN MILL'S FUTURE CHAMPION NOVICE CHASE
2m 4f £14,490 (9 declared) — CH4

[illegible]

3.25 SAMSUNG ELECTRONICS SCOTTISH CHAMPION HURDLE (HANDICAP)
2m £16,416 (11 declared) — CH4

[illegible]

4.05 STAKIS CASINOS SCOTTISH GRAND NATIONAL HANDICAP CHASE
4m 1f £41,316 (18 declared) — CH4

[illegible]

4.40 CLIENT ENTERTAINMENT SERVICES HANDICAP CHASE
2m £5,183 (9 declared) — CH4

[illegible]

5.10 GLENMUIR FUTURE CHAMPION STANDARD OPEN NATIONAL HUNT FLAT (Div 1)
2m £1,711 (20 declared)

[illegible]

5.40 GLENMUIR FUTURE CHAMPION STANDARD OPEN NATIONAL HUNT FLAT (Div 2)
2m £1,711 (20 declared)

[illegible]

COURSE SPECIALISTS

[illegible]

Results

NEWBURY

[illegible]

THIRSK

[illegible]

AYR

[illegible]

Snooker

THE WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP: Clive Everton sets the scene at the Crucible, where battle commences today with Stephen Hendry, unbeaten there since 1991, facing a tough draw as he goes for a sixth successive title on the 17th day

Return to the baize of hope and glory

THE last time Stephen Hendry lost at the Crucible — 13–11 to Steve James in the 1991 quarter-final — he had dominated the season, winning seven titles. He has done as well again, avoiding the mid-season slump characteristic of recent years.

In the current campaign he has won five titles and helped Scotland win the World Cup but, in losing 9–2 to Mark Williams in the British Open final at Plymouth a fortnight ago, he showed unmistakable signs of burn-out. "I should feel gutted but I don't," he said. "There was nothing left in the tank."

Always resolute in adversity on major occasions, he has become much more stubborn about losing on those which are not. He has won more matches than ever in second gear this season, but at the cost of draining his reserves.

He is already certain to retain top position in the world rankings for an eighth consecutive season — beating Steve Davis's record of seven — and in each of those years his earnings have topped £400,000. But his chances of winning a sixth world title in succession and seventh in all must depend on how completely his mind is refreshed.

His draw is the toughest possible. Andy Hicks, the world No. 18, who was a world semi-finalist two years ago, is certainly no opening-day stroll. In the last 16 he will probably face his recent conqueror Williams, at 22 winner of three world-ranking titles and the circuit's most improved player. "It's a psychological boost for me but I don't think it will make any difference to him if we meet at the Crucible," said the 22-year-old Welshman of their British Open result.

Hendry's prospective quarter-final opponent is Ronnie O'Sullivan, a 21-year-old virtuoso who can outplay anybody but can also be his own worst enemy. He has won two titles this season and had an irresistible six-frame winning streak from 2–8 to 8–8 in the Liverpool Victoria final in January before Hendry took the decider with a 147.

If O'Sullivan is again inspired by playing the champion, this could be the match of the championship. "I don't think Stephen's ever faced that level of opposition early on," said Peter Ebdon, who played him in last year's final.

Hendry's semi-final, most probably against John Parrott or Nigel Bond, would be no pushover, particularly if he has been through two or three close finishes.

From the bottom half the likeliest finalists are Ebdon, who has won two titles this season, John Higgins and Steve Davis, who have won one each. None, frankly, has looked a potential world champion this season but, by gathering momentum in the next two weeks, one of them might do so by the time the best-of-35-frames final starts on May 4.

POTTED HISTORY: Where are the men of the Crucible's golden days?

When television and sponsorship brought serious money into snooker, it seemed like Christmas. For some players that holiday period lasted for most of the Eighties.

Few contemplated retirement on a distant horizon or the implications of loss of form but, as new stars joined the circuit and a new generation began to dominate, life changed from a quest for glory in front of millions of television viewers to a struggle to make a living.

Clive Everton recalls some lost faces from the Crucible's brightest years.

Kirk Stevens
Aged 39, two world semi-finals, two world quarters.
Almost died of cocaine addiction. Took a few years to get his life back together in Canada but is now resident professional at DA's Snooker Club in Kitchener, Ontario. Recently broke up with the mother of his two children. A return to the circuit is not to be ruled out through the WPBSA's new faster-track qualifying system, which would not inolve him spending three months in Blackpool.

John Spencer
Aged 62, three times world champion.
Forced into retirement in 1985 by *myasthenia gravis*, a deterioration of the muscles which caused double vision. The daily intake of necessary drugs caused extreme mood swings from aggression — he once smashed up his own kitchen — to suicidal depressions. He was chairman of the WPBSA from 1989 to November 30 last year and remains a BBC TV summariser.

Tony Knowles
Aged 41, start-of-season ranking 42; provisional ranking 71.
Twice world semi-finalist — within a ball of the 1983 final. Took a long time to live down his three-part extravaganza of sexual boasting in the Sun when he was world No. 2. Backlash included "I said 'no' to Tony Knowles" T-shirts. Suffered severe financial bruising in disastrous management deal. Unsuccessfully sought election to board of WPBSA. Proprietor of TK's, a night-club in Horwich and TK's Wine And Sports Bar half a mile from Bolton Wanderers' new ground.

Bill Werbeniuk
Aged 50, four times world quarter-finalist.
Car accident left him with a shake in his cue arm which he attempted to stabilise with a heavy intake of lager, though any success in this direction might have been more due to the beta-blocker Inderal he took before it was banned. In any case he found he was unable to play to normal form without it — the Inderal, that is. Left circuit and was last seen playing cards for a living in Vancouver. Winner of £500-a-side drinking contest in early Eighties when still standing after 27 pints. Played snooker to a reasonable standard immediately afterwards.

Eddie Charlton
Aged 68, twice runner-up in world championships.
Slipped down rankings and turned to pool rather than face the lengthy qualifying process. Still heavily booked for club exhibitions in Australia and New Zealand and plays several big pool tournaments a year anywhere from America to Japan. The only player of his generation to have more hair now than he did in his prime.

Joe Johnson
Aged 44, world champion as rank outsider 1986, runner-up 1987. Start-of-season ranking 47; provisional ranking 48.
Sensed his life might change when he found a tabloid reporter halfway up a drainpipe at his house the morning after he won the world title. Extra pressures and disastrous management entanglement set his game back badly. Had to adjust to spectacles "though I couldn't see the long ones properly the year I won the championship". Had near-fatal heart attack and several other scares. Loves the game too much to give it up and is acting as mentor to the exceptional Yorkshire hope Paul Hunter. Reckons he is playing "as well as when I won the championship. The trouble is, everyone else has improved". Won Seniors Pot Black this year.

Cliff Thorburn
Aged 49. World champion 1980, the year many viewers rang up to say: "Never mind the Iranian Embassy siege, let's have the snooker."
The hero of many a late-night finish. Developed an aiming problem which meant that he was not hitting the middle of the cue-ball when he thought he was. Had sunk down the rankings by the time he sorted it out and decided a year ago that he could not face the qualifying school in Blackpool any more. Lucratively contracted to Differin, a Canadian cue firm, for whom he plays exhibitions in shopping malls. Also in demand for corporate work and starting to play pool more seriously: "Bigger pockets, no more long shots; sounds good to me."

Ray Reardon
Aged 64, six times world champion.
Took too long to adjust to playing in spectacles: "The peripheral vision was the problem. I couldn't judge a cut." Ranked 126th when he decided six years ago he could not face the qualifying circuit any more but still plays a full programme of club exhibitions, usually in clubs where he first played when he was champion: "These people are my friends." Still practises in Torquay most days: "I play for fun. This is how I started. This is how I'll finish."

Mike Hallett
Aged 37. Two world quarter-finals. Start-of-season ranking 46; provisional ranking 81.
Best ranking (1989–90) No. 6. Bankrupt. Has not won a match this season. Commentating for Sky.

Tony Meo
Aged 37, world semi-finalist 1989, and one quarter-final. Start-of-season ranking 75; provisional ranking 145.
Lost confidence, slipped down the rankings. What is he doing now? "Nothing really."

Bangor National Hunt card

	RON COX	TOP FORM
2.10	Cherokee Chief	Persian Elite
2.40	My Nominee	My Nominee
3.10	Indian Jockey	Indian Jockey
3.45	Prussia	Hooden Hawk
4.15	Quite A Man	Harvest View
4.45	Orange Ragusa	Avostar
5.15	Kierchem	Shift Again

A fairly sharp left-handed course of one and a half miles.
Going: Good. ★ Denotes blinkers.
Long distance travellers: 3.45 Tiger Claw, A Hobbs, Devon, 223 miles; 2.40 Press For Action, 4.45 Orange Ragusa, S Shirley-Beavan, Hawick, 199 miles; 2.10 One Boy, 3.45 Prime Display, A Harvey, Essex, 180 miles.
Seven days winners: 3.45 Sharp Command.
Blinkered for the first time: 2.10 Persian Elite.
Figures in brackets after horse's name denote days since last outing

2.10 CREWE NOVICE HURDLE 2m 4f £2,948 (18 declared)

[illegible]

2.40 ROBERT JONES 21ST OPEN HUNTERS' CHASE (amateurs) 2m 4f 110yds £1,690 (11 declared)

[illegible]

3.10 HALLIWELL LANDAU NOVICE CHASE 2m 1f 110yds £4,202 (6 declared)

[illegible]

3.45 SOTHEBY'S HANDICAP HURDLE 3m £3,648 (16 declared)

[illegible]

4.15 BROOKES BELL NOVICE HANDICAP CHASE 2m 4f 110yds £3,599 (10 declared)

[illegible]

4.45 JANE MCALPINE MEMORIAL HUNTERS' CHASE (amateurs) 3m 110yds £1,618 (9 declared)

[illegible]

5.15 EMRAL HANDICAP HURDLE 2m 1f £2,853 (14 declared)

[illegible]

COURSE SPECIALISTS

[illegible]

Stratford (N.H) programme

	RON COX	TOP FORM
2.35	Shekels	Shekels
3.05	Callisoe Bay	Around The Horn
3.35	Alpha Leather	Ritto
4.05	Father Sky	Father Sky
4.35	Fox Pointer	Fox Pointer
5.05	Barford Sovereign	Secret Gift
5.35	Mountain Path	Pat Buckley

Left-handed triangular track of ten furlongs. It is quite flat and there are eight fences of which two are in the short straight.
Going: Good to firm. ★ Denotes blinkers.
Long distance travellers: 5.35 Cloudy House, N Lampard, Devon, 189 miles; 5.35 Willows Roulette, A Hobbs, Devon, 185 miles; 2.35 Isis Dawn, A Newcombe, Devon, 159 miles; 4.35 Fox Pointer, Mrs L Evans, Dyfed, 158 miles.
Seven day winners: 3.05 Polden Pride, 5.05 Daily Sport Girl.
Blinkered first time: 4.35 Lord Kilton.
Figures in brackets after horse's name are the number of days since its latest outing

2.35 JENKINSONS NOVICE HURDLE (Div I) 2m 6f 110yds £1,744 (11 declared)

[illegible]

3.05 LAURENT-PERRIER HANDICAP CHASE 2m 4f £4,133 (9 declared)

[illegible]

3.35 RICHARDSONS PARKWAY NOVICE HANDICAP HURDLE 2m 110yds £2,360 (17 declared)

[illegible]

4.05 STRATFORD-ON-AVON NOVICE CHASE 3m £4,419 (9 declared)

[illegible]

4.35 RICHARDSONS STAR SITE HUNTERS' CHASE (amateurs) 2m 5f 110yds £2,038 (16 declared)

[illegible]

5.05 RICHARDSONS MERLIN PARK MARES' HANDICAP HURDLE 2m 110yds £2,034 (11 declared)

[illegible]

5.35 JENKINSONS NOVICES' HURDLE (Div 2) 2m 6f 110yds £1,744 (11 declared)

[illegible]

COURSE SPECIALISTS

[illegible]

Cricket

Representative: England A v The Rest

Easy meat for Butcher and Gallian

Mike Selvey at Edgbaston

ALEC STEWART had cause to offer special thanks to Nick Knight this week when he took delivery of the Cornhill 1996 Player-of-the-Year award. After all, it was the shattering of the Warwickshire batsman's finger by Javagal Srinath, on his own Birmingham cabbage patch, that had opened the door for the Gaffer to return in triumph.

The first day of the season proper is a bit early to start wondering about recipients at the next awards' ceremony, but lightning may yet have struck again. With the index finger of Knight's right hand still studded with metal pins following another fracture — by Heath Davis in Auckland — a vacancy could exist for an opener by the time the first Test comes around, and yesterday Mark Butcher staked an early claim with a skilfully crafted century here for England A against The Rest.

Butcher might, conceivably, have played instead of Stewart last season but now, after a successful A tour of Australia in the winter, on which he was leading run scorer, he has elevated himself to the forefront of replacements.

All three selectors — Graham Gooch, David Graveney and Mike Gatting — were on hand to see Butcher and Jason Gallian produce an opening partnership of 237 that lasted until 15 minutes before tea, after Mark Ramprakash had asked the A team to bat.

Gallian, whose third and last Test was as a replacement in Port Elizabeth 16 months ago, made a composed 106 before he was caught in the gully but by the time Roy Palmer and, inevitably, Dickie Bird decided the light was too bad with 22 overs still to bowl, Butcher had reached 129, the seventh and most important century of his career to date. It will have given Knight just a flicker of concern last night.

It was a chastening introduction for Ramprakash to the vagaries of captaincy. With the cloud blanket low enough for the start to be delayed by 10 minutes, and a sappy pitch tinged with early-season green, his decision to bowl first would have raised few eyebrows. But a captain can be made to look foolish by his bowlers and, after early hints at success, his four seamers and two spinners all suffered at various times.

If the most prominent performance came from the 19-year-old Surrey pace bowler Alex Tudor, perhaps the most significant was reserved for Simon Brown. With Robert Croft's off-spin almost certain to play a part in the Ashes campaign, and England keen to find a left-arm seamer to provide some rough for the Glamorgan man, Brown, rather than Alan Mullally, was the name on the grapevine.

Brown's one Test, at Lord's last year, was a disaster, with his singular lack of swing ascribed, in part, to the type of ball used. That problem has since been resolved — in future England will use the ball they choose — and it was hoped Brown might be entrusted with the task. Unfortunately, his willingness under fire (he plays for Durham, so he has that experience) was not matched by success, and the selectors will have to look elsewhere.

After a season missed through injury Tudor had a good Under-19 tour of Pakistan last winter and from his first ball, which brought a confident appeal for a catch behind off Butcher, he offered Ramprakash his one crumb of comfort, with his pace, bounce and the impression that there is a bit more in reserve.

Tudor might have claimed Gallian's wicket when 27, but the umpires decided that Vikram Solanki's catch at third slip had failed to carry. So it was not until shortly before the close that he was rewarded when he slid one past Michael Vaughan's outside edge and pinned back his off stump.

ENGLAND A
First innings

M A Butcher not out	129
J E R Gallian c Hollioake b Silverwood	106
M P Vaughan b Tudor	10
A McGrath not out	1
Extras (lb15, w2, nb9)	26
Total (for 2, 78.2 overs)	272

Fall of wickets: 237, 271.

To bat: *A J Hollioake, M A Ealham, †W K Hegg, P M Such, G Chapple, A J Harris, D W Headley.

Bowling: Silverwood 18-4-63-1; Brown 19-5-56-0; Tudor 15.2-4-39-1; Hollioake 9-1-45-0; Solanki 5-2-18-0; Cosker 14-2-36-0.

THE REST: J S Laney, D L Maddy, C J Adams, *M R Ramprakash, B C Hollioake, †R J Warren, V S Solanki, D A Cosker, A J Tudor, S J E Brown, C E W Silverwood.

Umpires: H D Bird and R Palmer.

Opposition candidates . . . Butcher looks ahead as his Surrey team-mate Tudor gets his message across TOM JENKINS

Rugby League

Henry Paul's back forces him to miss out

Paul Fitzpatrick

WIGAN's Henry Paul will be absent from the Warriors side that faces Oldham Bears at Central Park tomorrow and the New Zealander also looks certain to miss his country's match against Australia in Sydney on Friday.

Paul had been selected at full-back for that game in place of Matthew Ridge, himself injured, and would have travelled with his younger brother Robbie, one of New Zealand's substitutes.

Wigan, however, do not feel that Henry will be fit to make the 24-hour flight, which they believe could exacerbate a back problem. He suffered the injury in the St Helens game on Good Friday and had to be helped from the pitch. He has not played since.

The brothers are the only English-based players in the New Zealand side, but it would appear that Bradford's Robbie will be making the journey alone.

"Henry has only just started some light rehabilitation training and I think the medical advice will be for him not to travel," said Eric Hughes, the Wigan coach. "I will have to discuss the situation with Henry and hope that he errs on the side of caution."

Wigan are still hoping to get work permit clearance in time for their Tongan prop Lee Hansen to make his debut after signing from Widnes. If he is unavailable they will be able to call on the fit-again Neil Cowie. Nigel Wright will continue his "gradual" process of working his way back into the first team and Hughes says the stand-off might be given a run for 30 or 40 minutes.

Leeds Rhinos will have Barrie McDermott available for the match at Sheffield. The prop has completed a three-match suspension and could be in a side likely to include the former Sheffield players Ryan Sheridan and Anthony Farrell.

Castleford Tigers, still under the temporary control of Mick Morgan for the visit of Halifax Blue Sox, will be without their goalkicking Western Samoan centre John Schuster. Castleford's new coach, the Australian Stuart Raper, arrives at Wheldon Road the next week.

The Tigers emerged without any serious injury problems from their midweek game at Leeds and will be looking for their first points of the season. Halifax, with three wins and a draw so far, could move Martin Pearson into the centre and bring Chris Chester in at stand-off.

Wolves add bite by signing Briers

WARRINGTON Wolves completed the most unexpected transfer of the season yesterday when they signed 18-year-old Lee Briers from St Helens, *writes Paul Fitzpatrick.*

The Wolves have paid around £60,000 for the richly promising scrum-half, who will play against his former club at Knowsley Road tomorrow when Saints meet Warrington, who have won their past three games after a poor start.

Briers played in the winter challenge contests between St Helens and Wigan but was given his first-class debut against Hull in the Silk Cut Challenge Cup in February in the absence of Bobbie Goulding.

Goulding served a six-match suspension and, during his absence, Briers made a highly favourable impression, scoring a try and kicking 25 goals.

The game at large probably echoed the sentiments of Alex Murphy, Warrington's football executive, who said yesterday how surprised Warrington were that Saints had let him go.

"He is a tremendous prospect and a top goalkicker," said Murphy. "It is a marvellous signing for the club."

Briers, who will be 19 in June and has signed a four-year contract, admitted it was a big decision to leave his home-town club. "I was disappointed not to be kept on the bench when Bobbie returned from suspension, and I do feel that I have a point to prove," he said. "It won't bother me returning to Saints — there's no better place to make my first appearance."

Sheffield Eagles will raise £750,000 by becoming the first rugby league club to float on the stock market. Eagles plc, the holding company, yesterday revealed plans to join the junior Alternative Investment Market with a value of £3.9 million.

Friendly: Lancashire v Yorkshire

Yorkshire suffer bombs and roses

Andy Wilson at Headingley

LANCASHIRE awoke yesterday to the bomb scare in Leeds city centre which later forced their hotel to be evacuated. It caused them no more inconvenience than having to find a different way through the traffic jams to Headingley; considerably more frustrating was the resistance of the Yorkshire batsmen, particularly Colin Chapman.

After resuming on 34 for one, still 159 behind, by early afternoon Yorkshire had slipped to 127 for five, Green dismissing Byas with a beauty while the other three fell to Peter Martin. Lancashire were on course to wrap up a comfortable victory just as their hotel was reopened, and to make as quick a getaway as the M621 allowed.

They finally dismissed Yorkshire for 298 just before the close and need only 106 for their first win in five of these premier Roses games, but most of their players would rather be at home watching Manchester United play Liverpool this morning.

The 25-year-old Chapman messed up those plans. Since joining the staff in 1989 he had only batted for the first team seven times, but a rib injury to Richard Blakey handed him a chance in this game: the lot of a reserve wicketkeeper.

Perhaps that explained the determination he showed in beating his career-best with 35 in the first innings, then he added 80 in his second, made in more than four hours.

He has also been tidier behind the stumps than Jamie Haynes, Lancashire's deputy for Warren Hegg, who missed a chance in each innings. Chapman was supported for almost two hours by Hamilton in a stubborn seventh-wicket stand that ended only when Hamilton, one short of his half-century, ran himself out.

Batty, who had suffered a golden duck in his maiden first-class innings, fared much better second time round, playing some attractive on-side shots. But he was the first of two victims for Austin with the second new ball, which also allowed Martin to find the extra bounce to account for Chapman and finish with four for 53.

● Mervyn Kitchen, George Sharp, David Shepherd and Peter Willey, England's four representatives on the international panel, have been appointed umpires for this summer's Ashes series.

John Hampshire and Ray Julian will oversee the three-match Texaco Trophy one-day series and Chris Balderstone, Barry Dudleston, David Constant, John Holder, Allan Jones or Ken Palmer will be the third or TV umpires for the Texaco and Test series.

YORKSHIRE: First innings 289 (B Parker 85no, M J Wood 81; Yates 4-46).

LANCASHIRE: First innings 482 (G D Lloyd 225, I D Austin 83).

YORKSHIRE
Second innings (overnight: 34-1)

M J Wood lbw b Martin	21
*D Byas c Haynes b Green	29
R A Kettleborough lbw b Martin	1
B Parker c Lloyd b Martin	36
†C A Chapman c Fairbrother b Martin	80
A G Wharf c Green b Watkinson	5
G M Hamilton run out	49
G J Batty b Austin	18
R D Stamp b Austin	16
M J Hoggard not out	1
Extras (b2, lb14, w4, nb2)	22
Total (115.3 overs)	298

Fall of wickets cont: 39, 47, 79, 127, 144, 238, 280, 282.

Bowling: Martin 30-9-53-4; Green 24-8-77-1; Flintoff 10-6-11-1; Austin 26.3-8-65-2; Watkinson 10-3-32-1; Yates 14-4-41-0; Titchard 2-0-3-0.

Umpires: K E Palmer and R A White.

Rain means no gain for the Indian tourists

GUYANA's notorious weather rained off the second day of the fifth Test here yesterday with India, on 194 for two, needing to win to square the series with West Indies, *writes Avidesh Persaud in Georgetown.*

At home, Oxford turned their first-class talents on Hampshire yesterday at The Parks, fired by the previous day's gritty display against Durham.

Chetan Patel followed up his half-century with a seventh-wicket stand of 99 with Peter Morgan (60) that gave the students the rare pleasure of declaring against a county, at 243 for nine, having been 107 for six.

Meanwhile the Light Blues took another hammering at Fenner's, where Leicestershire's Aftab Habib made 169 not out as the county reached 430 for three.

Golf

Haeggman soars after plumbing the depths

Michael Britten in Cannes

FOUR years ago Joakim Haeggman made history when Bernard Gallacher selected him as Sweden's first Ryder Cup player. This week he could surpass one of the Scot's proudest achievements after careering from the ridiculous to the sublime on the Riviera yesterday.

Haeggman scored 63 in the Cannes Open, a staggering 20-stroke improvement on his opening effort at Royal Mougins, and although he will start today's third round 11 shots behind the leader, Stuart Cage, nothing should be deemed impossible in the world of new golfing tigers.

Gallacher demonstrated as much 26 years ago when he shot 80 on the opening day of the Martini Tournament at Royal Norwich, followed with a 68, and went on to a most unlikely victory. Haeggman, 27, admits that since his appearance against the United States at The Belfry in 1993 he has not fulfilled expectations by sliding to 40th, then 60th in the money list in the last two seasons.

But yesterday he was back to his old ebullient self after claiming nine birdies to survive the midway cut, and was scornful of those who quit when the going gets tough, as it did here on Thursday when Haeggman started 6-5-8 and took 43 to the turn.

He was out in 30 the second time around, sank five 20-foot putts, and saw three more, that would have erased David Carter's course record of 62, spin out of the hole.

"My score is a message to all those who pull out after a bad first round," he added. "It happens far too often on the Tour. It is not only discourteous to the sponsor to walk out and plead injury as an excuse. It is also a snub to your fellow professionals."

Haeggman did not have a monopoly of brilliance on the Riviera. Paul Eales had four twos in a 65, Santiago Luna's 66 contained seven improvements to the card, and Yorkshire's Cage compiled a solid 67.

Ice Hockey

Britain's promotion hopes slip with their two-goal lead

Tony Allen in Katowice

AFTER establishing an early lead and increasing it to 2-0 in the second period, Great Britain were forced to stave off a late rally by Austria before eventually settling for one point from a 2-2 draw on day five of Pool B at the World Championships here in Poland yesterday.

Kevin Conway opened the scoring, with three seconds of a powerplay remaining, after Tim Cranston's effort had been blocked. Four minutes into the second period, Doug McEwen gathered the puck near the centre line and raced away to score a spectacular unassisted goal.

But, within four minutes, Austria pulled a goal back. Herbert Hohenberger, having served a two-minute penalty, timed his exit from the sin bin perfectly to beat Foster from close range.

Martin Ulrich then skated around Shannon Hope with considerable ease to score Austria's second goal with just over five minutes remaining. Neil Morgan, though, was presented with a gilt-edged chance to score the winner but, with only 50 seconds left on the clock, he shot straight at the Austrian goaltender.

This result leaves Britain with five points from five games and an outside chance of a top-four finish and the opportunity to take part in qualification for an expanded Pool A next season. However, they will need at least one more point from their remaining games against Switzerland and Belarus.

● Manchester Storm yesterday appointed the American, Kurt Kleinendorst, 35, as head coach and director of ice hockey operations. The former head coach of the Raleigh Ice Caps in North America's East Coast Hockey League replaces John Lawless, who was sacked on Monday.

Results

Rugby Union

SUPER 12: ACT 15, Otago 9.

Rugby League

AUSTRALIAN SUPER LEAGUE: Balmain 9, North Sydney 7.

Soccer

NATIONWIDE LEAGUE
First Division

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Bolton	43	27	12	4	94	50	93
Barnsley	42	21	13	8	70	45	76
Wolverhampton	42	20	9	13	61	47	69
Sheff Utd	43	19	11	13	73	51	68
Port Vale	43	17	15	11	56	50	66
Ipswich	42	17	13	12	63	49	64
Crystal Palace	42	17	12	13	71	44	63
Tranmere	43	17	12	14	60	51	63
Norwich	43	17	11	15	63	63	62
Portsmouth	42	18	8	16	53	48	62
QPR	43	16	12	15	58	57	60
Birmingham	43	15	14	14	47	47	59
Stoke	43	16	10	17	47	58	58
Man City	42	16	9	17	58	54	57
Charlton	42	15	10	17	49	60	55
Reading	42	14	12	16	52	68	54
West Brom	43	13	14	16	65	70	53
Swindon	43	15	8	20	52	67	53
Oxford Utd	43	14	9	20	57	65	51
Huddersfield	43	12	13	18	46	60	49
Bradford	42	10	12	20	43	68	42
Grimsby	42	9	12	21	53	78	39
Oldham	43	9	12	22	48	64	39
Southend	43	8	15	20	40	76	39

(not including last night's match)

Second Division

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Bury	42	22	10	10	59	38	76
Brentford	42	20	14	8	58	39	74
Stockport	41	20	12	9	53	37	72
Luton	42	19	13	10	67	44	70
Crewe	42	21	5	16	51	43	68
Watford	42	16	18	8	45	29	66
Bristol City	42	18	10	14	61	48	64
Walsall	42	18	10	14	53	47	64
Burnley	43	18	9	16	63	60	63
Wrexham	42	15	17	10	47	45	62
Millwall	43	16	13	14	50	50	61
Blackpool	42	15	15	12	52	41	60
Gillingham	42	16	10	16	52	56	58
Chesterfield	40	14	14	12	36	35	56
Bournemouth	43	14	13	16	40	43	55
Bristol Rovers	43	14	11	18	43	45	53
Preston	43	15	7	21	44	55	52
Wycombe	43	14	9	20	47	53	51
Plymouth	43	11	17	15	44	55	50
York	42	12	12	18	43	62	48
Shrewsbury	43	11	13	19	49	68	46
Peterborough	43	10	14	19	54	71	44
Notts County	43	7	13	23	32	58	34
Rotherham	43	6	13	24	34	64	31

Third Division

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Wigan	44	24	9	11	79	51	81
Fulham	43	23	11	9	69	38	80
Carlisle	43	22	12	9	62	40	78
Swansea	43	20	7	16	57	53	67
Cardiff	43	19	9	15	52	49	66
Northampton	43	18	11	14	62	43	65
Colchester	44	16	16	12	58	48	64
Cambridge Utd	43	18	10	15	52	54	64
Chester	43	16	16	11	49	41	64
Mansfield	43	15	16	12	43	39	61
Lincoln	43	16	12	15	66	67	60
Scarborough	43	15	15	13	63	65	60
Scunthorpe	43	17	9	17	58	59	60
Barnet	43	13	16	14	41	42	55
Hull	43	12	18	13	41	44	54
Rochdale	43	12	16	15	51	55	52
Leyton Orient	43	13	12	18	45	54	51
Darlington	43	13	10	20	60	73	49
Torquay	43	13	10	20	44	56	49
Doncaster	43	13	9	21	50	64	48
Exeter	43	12	12	19	45	62	48
Hereford	43	11	12	20	47	61	45
Hartlepool	43	12	8	23	45	63	44
Brighton	43	12	8	23	50	68	42

Golf

CANNES OPEN: Leading second-round scores (GB/Ire unless stated): **135** S Cage 68, 67. **136** S Luna (Sp) 70, 66. **137** P Eales 72, 65. **138** P Broadhurst 68, 70. **139** T Bjorn (Den) 71, 68; S Scahill (NZ) 67, 72. **140** S Bottomley 70, 70; P McGinley 72, 68; N Briggs 71, 69; B Tinning 72, 68. **141** F Valera (Sp) 72, 69; D Smyth 72, 69; A Coltart 71, 70; R Muntz (Neth) 68, 73; N Fasth (Swe) 73, 68. **142** M Gronberg (Swe) 71, 71; C Whitelaw (SA) 71, 71; R McFarlane 70, 72; D Carter 68, 74; C Suneson (Swe) 73, 69. **143** P Walton 70, 73; A Sherborne 69, 74; M Jonzon (Swe) 72, 71; D Cooper 73, 70; P Mitchell 73, 70; A Sandywell 76, 67. **144** D Westermark (Swe) 71, 73; P Sjoland (Swe) 72, 72; B Lane 75, 69; P Curry 72, 72; M Lanner (Swe) 72, 72; D Howell 72, 72; P Fulke (Swe) 74, 70; R Rafferty 74, 70; R Russell 72, 72; M-A Martin (Sp) 71, 73; D Hospital (Sp) 74, 70; D Higgins 76, 68; P Linhart (Sp) 71, 73; J Mellor 72, 72.

HERITAGE CLASSIC (Hilton Head Is): Leading first-round scores (US unless stated): **65** N Price (Zim). **66** T Lehman; R Fehr; B Faxon. **67** L Clements; H Sutton. **68** J Maginnes; J Leonard; P Mickelson; F Funk; T Watson; O Browne; C Stadler. **69** B Glasson; S Stricker; J Wilson; J D Blake. **70** S Appleby (Aus); J Sindelar; B Fabel; S Hoch; D Pooley; D A Weibring; D Love; N Henke; W Levi. **British: 71** C Montgomerie. **74** N Faldo. **79** S Lyle.

Tennis

BARCELONA OPEN: Quarter-final: A Costa (Sp) bt C Pioline (Fr) 6-4, 6-2.

JAPAN OPEN (Tokyo): **Men: Fourth round:** R Krajicek (Neth) bt D Prinosil (Ger) 6-4, 6-3; P Rafter (Aus) bt T Woodbridge (Aus) 6-4, 7-6; T Johansson (Swe) bt M Woodforde (Aus) 6-3, 6-4; L Roux (Fr) bt M Damm (Cz) 6-3, 6-1. **Women: Semi-final:** A Frazier (US) bt A Ellwood (Aus) 6-2, 6-3.

Australian Rules

AFL: Western Bulldogs 13.11 (89), Melbourne 13.9 (87).

Bowls

WOMEN'S WORLD INDOOR C'SHIP (Llanelli): **Section A:** S Hazell (Eng) bt K Horman (Jer) 7-6, 7-5; A Sutherland (Wales) bt P Nolan (Ire) 7-0, 7-5; Sutherland bt Hazell 7-5, 6-7, 7-3; Nolan bt Horman 7-4, 1-7, 7-6. **B:** M Castle (NZ) bt J Lowery (Jer) 7-1, 4-7, 7-6; C McAllister (Scot) bt M Wilkinson (Ire) 7-4, 6-7, 7-6; Castle bt Wilkinson 7-1, 7-1; McAllister bt Lowery 2-7, 7-6, 7-6. **C:** M Shaw (Eng) bt R Forrest (Can) 7-1, 4-7, 7-0; E McGarvie (Scot) bt A Simon (Gue) 7-4, 6-7, 7-2; Simon bt Forrest 7-1, 7-5; Shaw bt McGarvie 7-2, 7-4. **D:** J Roylance (Eng) bt A Merrien (Gue) 7-6, 7-0; Lai Suk Man (HK) bt L Evans (Wales) 7-4, 5-7, 7-4; Roylance bt Evans 7-4, 7-2; Merrien bt Li Sukman 7-5, 7-3.

Cricket

OTHER MATCHES: The Parks: Oxford Univ 243-9 dec (P G Morgan 60). Hampshire 9-0. **Fenner's:** Leicestershire 430-3 (A Habib 169no, I J Sutcliffe 99, J M Dakin 88 no) v Cambridge Univ.

FIFTH TEST: Georgetown (first day): India 194-2 (R Dravid 71no, S Tendulkar 82no) v West Indies.

Table Tennis

COMMONWEALTH C'SHIPS (Glasgow): **Doubles: Quarter-finals: Men:** A Cooke/B Billington (Eng) bt Jun Hui Liu/Tian Syh Eng (Mal) 22-20, 21-13; S Langerson/P Jackson (NZ) bt Yew Fai San/Chin Guan Koh (Sing) 6-21, 21-17, 21-14; S Jenkins/S Ward (Wales) bt Hao Tao Geng/F Trudel (Can) 21-19, 21-18; C Baboor/S Raman (India) bt P Preadeeban/K Liu (Can) 21-14, 21-18. **Women:** Jing Jun Hong/Jia Wei Li (Sing) bt S Hurry/E Walker (Scot) 21-18, 21-17; Bee Sim Pham/Lee Wei Beh (Mal) bt H Lower/L Radford (Eng) 21-18, 21-12; B Daunton/N Williams (Wales) bt Miao Miao/S Zhou (Aus) 15-21, 24-22, 21-14; Li Ping Koh/Pasy Fern Tan (Sing) bt A Holt/N Deaton (Eng) 15-21, 21-15, 21-11.

Squash

MUTUALITE FRANCAISE TOUR FINAL (Bordeaux): **Quarter-finals:** J Khan (Pak) bt Z Jahan (Pak) w/o; B Martin (Aus) bt D Jenson (Aus) 15-11, 12-15, 15-9, 15-11; S Parke (Eng) bt A Hill (Aus) 15-13, 15-6, 15-7; R Eyles (Aus) bt C Van der Wath (SA) 15-13, 15-11, 15-12.

Swimming

WORLD SHORT-COURSE CHAMPIONSHIP (Gothenburg): **Men: Freestyle: 400m:** 1, J Carstensen (Den) 3:43.44; 2, C Carvin (US) 3:43.73; 3, G Hackett (Aus) 3:43.83; 4, P Palmer (GB) 3:43.90 (GB rec); 7, G Smith (GB) 3:51.66. **4x200m relay:** 1, Australia 7:02.74 (world rec); 2, Sweden 7:05.61; 3, GB (P Palmer, A Clayton, M Stevens, J Salter) 7:05.61 (GB rec). **100m breaststroke:** 1, F Isaksson (Swe) 59.99; 2, S Lopukhov (Rus) 1:00.05; 3, J Kruppa (Ger) 1:00.18; 4, R Maden (GB) 1:00.32. **200m backstroke:** 1, N Bent (Cuba) 1:54.21; 2, Weng Wei (China) 1:54.82; 3, V Selkov (Rus) 1:55.15; 4, A Ruckwood (GB) 1:55.56 (GB rec).

Women: Freestyle: 50m: 1, S Volker (Ger) 24.70; 2, J Thompson (US) 24.79; 3, Le Jingyi (China) 24.88; 8, S Rolph (GB) 25.41. **200m:** 1, C Poll (C Rica) 1:54.17 (world rec); 2, Nian Yin (China) 1:55.24; 3, M Moravcova (Slovak) 1:56.68. **800m:** 1, N Bowron (Aus) 8:26.45; 2, K Kielgass (Ger) 8:26.10; 3, C Geurts (Neth) 8:26.96. **200m breaststroke:** 1, K Elliott (Aus) 2:22.69; 2, L Locusta (Rom) 2:25.60; 3, A Peczak (Pol) 2:25.82. **100m backstroke:** 1, Lu Donghua (China) 59.75; 2, Chen Yan (China) 1:00.14; 3, M Hyman (US) 1:00.17.

Sport in brief

Swimming

Britain's 4x200 metres freestyle quartet of Paul Palmer, James Salter, Andrew Clayton and Mark Stevens won bronze medals at the world short-course championships at Gothenburg, Sweden.

Earlier Palmer, a silver medallist in Atlanta, broke his own British record by 0.13sec with a time of 3min 43.90sec in the 400m freestyle final. But he had to settle for fourth place, as did Richard Maden in the 100m breaststroke and Alan Ruckwood in the 200m backstroke.

Soccer

Napoli's Luigi Simoni will take over from Roy Hodgson as the coach of Internazionale next season. The Milan club's president Massimo Moratti said yesterday that he did not yet know whether the England midfielder Paul Ince would be staying on.

Motorcycling

The world 500cc champion Michael Doohan comfortably took provisional pole position for tomorrow's Japanese Grand Prix when he lapped Suzuka almost two seconds faster than his nearest rival, Japan's Norihiko Fujiwara.

Table Tennis

Cooke looks hot for gold

Richard Jago in Glasgow

ALAN COOKE remains on course for three golds. His two wins on Thursday started and finished the 4-1 win with which England's men regained the Commonwealth Championships team title by beating India. Yesterday Cooke won three times in the men's doubles to take his top-seeded partnership with Bradley Billington to the semi-finals. And the former champion begins his attempt to win back the singles title with four matches in a day here in the Kelvin Hall.

Cooke and Billington's third win was their best. After routine successes against Campbell and Alleyene of Barbados and Sahajasein and Bhurtun of Mauritius, they beat Liu Jun-Hui and Tian Syh-Eng of Malaysia 22-20, 21-13. Cooke is seeded second in the singles but on current form he is arguably the front-runner.

Billington and Andrea Holt, top seeds in the mixed doubles, lost in the quarter-finals to the Indians, Raman and Bhurneshwari.

Wales won their first Commonwealth medal and within minutes made it two. Bethan Daunton and Natasha Williams upset the Australians, Miao Miao and Shirley Zhou, to reach the women's doubles semi-finals, then Ryan Jenkins and Stephen Ward reached the same stage of the men's doubles.

Rugby Union

Jill Turner meets Richmond's nearly man given the chance to rebuild his England career in Argentina

Clarke hurt by life without Lions

FOR Ben Clarke, the versatile back-row man once tipped to succeed Will Carling as England's captain, the wheel of fortune is cranking into action again.

After spending much of the international season gathering splinters on the bench the 1993 British Lion, who so impressed the New Zealanders that they wanted to keep him, was omitted from the list for this summer's tour of South Africa. All this followed early-season criticism of being money-led for leaving Bath to take up a reported £500,000 contract at Richmond, of allowing his game to slip and, before that, of a weak performance as England pack leader during the 1996 Five Nations.

But the tide seems to be turning. Richmond, under his leadership, are certain to gain promotion after last weekend's win over Waterloo, possibly as League Two champions if they win their remaining two games. He has also been named in the England squad for Argentina, with every chance of adding to his 28 caps since England's new back row of Lawrence Dallaglio, Richard Hill and Tim Rodber will be on duty with the Lions.

> 'The changes for me, if you add them up, amounted to something quite major'

His characteristic grin is back in place. "I've got the chance to prove I'm still capable of playing international rugby," he said. "It's been pretty frustrating just sitting on the bench."

After moving from Bishop's Stortford to Saracens to Bath, he made his England debut in 1992 and was called up by the Lions the following year. But his season of League Two rugby with Richmond has been part of a learning curve that mirrors the hiccup in his personal career.

"I've been to lots of rugby clubs which I thought I'd never go to, because I've always played in Division One. I've noticed how things have changed. The last time I was at Nottingham they were in League One, Moseley too. Moseley are on the way up again but, when we played them, we put 80 points on them, whereas the time I was there before that, with Saracens in the cup, we lost.

"It's the cycles of sport, I suppose. The clubs that have stuck at it and kept themselves going are still there whereas, if you relax a bit, it's very easy to slip away."

His season spent largely in the international shadows came as a blow. "I was disappointed I played only one game for England but I didn't think I had been playing as well as I can. I don't know if it was playing Second Division rugby, leaving Bath, moving house, professionalism or what, but there were a lot of changes for me which, if you add them up, amount to something quite major.

"I had a bad ankle injury at the end of last season which sort of finished me off and kept me out of the Italy game to start with. It's been frustrating certainly but I feel a lot better about the way I'm playing now."

Missing out on the Lions' tour obviously hurt. "I was disappointed about not being chosen for the Lions but they went through the selection process and I didn't come up to it. That's that."

At club level he has ridden his first season well at Richmond, coping with the changes in the professional game. "I felt that I wanted to make a career out of professional rugby. There was a lot of uncertainty at Bath and, although I was happy there, I felt it was the right time to take something else on.

"With the professional game there was an opportunity for lots of clubs that were financially supported to regain their former glories. Richmond were one of them and I wanted to be part of something like that at the beginning. Those kind of opportunities don't come along very often and you have to take them when they do.

"I didn't feel it was a gamble; I mean, it could have been gamble if I had stayed at Bath. Obviously there was a risk factor but we felt we could offer the right opportunities to people, show them the club had the right ambitions and were determined to succeed and encourage them to come."

Come they did, for Ashley Levett's money, in the shape of Brian Moore, Scott and Craig Quinnell, Jim Fallon, Simon Davies and Richard West among others. But there has been much readjustment. At Bath there had been a comfort zone as a cog in a successful machine. At Richmond he shares the responsibility for ensuring success.

"It has been a learning process, and tough at times. But I'm fortunate in having good people around me, especially on the pitch, where it's hardest. You can't do that by yourself. The half-backs make a lot of the decisions, which takes weight off my shoulders."

He remains excited by the pressures of the developing professional game and relishes a future at its centre. "The game has changed a lot and still is changing, on the field and off. The standards are a lot higher, the skill levels better and people are playing the game in a more attacking way. And we've got South Africans, Australians and New Zealanders playing rugby in England, which is brilliant.

"There is a lot more interest in the league as well, with more sides competing for the top spot, and the cross-over with rugby league, the arrivals of foreign players, the European Cup have all made a world of difference."

Richmond play Wakefield today and go to Nottingham next weekend. But remembering his recent roller-coaster ride, Clarke is wary of counting chickens, now or for next season. "You must never underestimate your opponents. We don't take anything lightly, especially after the hard work we've put in over the season. It would be a shame to relax and sit back and make a mistake now.

"And next season is going to be difficult. Clubs like Bath, Leicester, Wasps and Quins will take some catching. We have to make sure our targets are kept in perspective. We want to do as well as we possibly can." He pauses. "But I don't want to get too carried away."

Outlook brighter . . . Ben Clarke is virtually assured of League One rugby again next season, with a summer tour to boot PHOTOGRAPH: TOM JENKINS

Neath in fear of oblivion

Paul Rees on a match that the Welsh All Blacks simply must win

THESE are dark days for Neath, the Welsh All Blacks and the country's oldest club. Last May they won the national league title for the second time but today they find themselves in unfamiliar territory: the relegation zone.

The champions knew they were in trouble the moment the WRU decided this month to create a Premier Division of eight clubs next August. Four sides from the vanishing First Division will be demoted into the new 16-team Second Division: Treorchy, Caerphilly and Newbridge are all effectively doomed, but any one of five clubs could fill the fourth berth.

Neath currently fill it but Bridgend, fifth in the table, are only four points ahead of them with Newport, *Ebbw Vale* and *Dunvant* in between. Neath play Newport at The Gnoll today in a match their chairman John Williams calls "the most important in our history".

Defeat would leave Neath in a precarious position because their next three games are against the leading sides, Pontypridd, Swansea and Llanelli.

"We have to beat Newport; it is as simple as that," said Williams. "We are angry that we are in this position. We knew it was going to be a transitional season for us because we lost the Llewellyn brothers and Leigh Davies last summer without being able to get a penny in transfer fees.

"Then the WRU in its wisdom decides towards the end of the season to create a Premier Division and double the number of clubs who will be relegated.

"Had we known this last August we, like other sides, could have heavily overspent and bought players we could not afford. We are being penalised for running the club prudently. Relegation would be a disaster for our club and the town."

Three Neath forwards in the current Wales squad, the club captain John Davies, Steve Williams and Barry Williams, would find their international prospects hit by relegation but Davies is more worried for the club.

"It has only just hit home among the players that we are in a big hole," he said. "We are good enough to pull things around but the pressure is building. Perhaps we have cruised too much in recent weeks but stark reality is confronting us now."

Williams is hoping for a packed Gnoll today. "It's very tense," he admitted. "I guess you could say it is a case of Blacks to the wall."

● Swansea's Wales outside-half Arwel Thomas returns at Newbridge today for his first First Division match since damaging a knee in February. Cardiff, their opponents in next Saturday's Swalec Cup final, have Jonathan Davies fit again after a bruised thigh for the visit of Dunvant.

	P	W	D	L	Tr	Pts
Pontypridd	17	15	0	2	82	44
Swansea	17	12	0	5	102	43
Llanelli	16	12	2	4	[illegible]	[illegible]
Cardiff	17	11	1	5	76	[illegible]
Bridgend	16	8	1	7	62	[illegible]
Newport	17	[illegible]	2	[illegible]	[illegible]	24
Ebbw Vale	18	10	2	6	[illegible]	24
Dunvant	18	[illegible]	2	8	[illegible]	22
Neath	17	7	[illegible]	10	[illegible]	[illegible]
Caerphilly	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	45	[illegible]
Treorchy	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	15	[illegible]	9
Newbridge	19	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	6

Wasps home in on title after rivals scrap for Europe

WASPS may tackle Sale at Loftus Road tomorrow with an outside chance of being Courage League One champions after the match.

It depends on today's matches at Leicester and Bath. Saracens would have to win at Welford Road and, even more improbably, the bottom club Orrell would need to beat Bath. Victory for Wasps would then give them the title.

Realistically, Lawrence Dallaglio's side — who are five points clear of Leicester, six of Bath — can expect to uncork the champagne next Saturday, when a win over Northampton would remove all doubt.

Behind them, the race for Europe continues, with Leicester, Bath, Sale and Harlequins contesting three places. Martin Johnson, Neil Back, Eric Miller and John Wells return for Leicester, who will be desperate to salve their wounded pride after suffering three defeats in nine days.

Neil Jenkins looks certain to be fit for the Lions tour of South Africa; his broken arm is making rapid progress. The Wales full-back, who sustained the injury during the 34–13 defeat by England last month, could return when Pontypridd wind up their league campaign with games against Newport on May 7 and Newbridge three days later.

Weekend fixtures

(3.0 unless stated)
(a-t = all-ticket)

Soccer

Tomorrow

AUTO WINDSCREENS SHIELD Final

Carlisle v Colchester (1.30)

Today

FA CARLING PREMIERSHIP

Arsenal v Blackburn
A Villa v Tottenham
Chelsea v Leicester
Liverpool v Man Utd
Middlesbrough v Sunderland
Newcastle v Derby
Nottm Forest v Leeds
Sheff Wed v Wimbledon
Southampton v Coventry
West Ham v Everton

GM VAUXHALL CONFERENCE: Altrincham v Dover; Bath v Welling; Halifax v Hayes, Hednesford v Slough, Morecambe v Kidderminster; Southport v Stevenage; Woking v Gateshead.

ICIS LEAGUE: Premier Division: Aylesbury v Enfield, Boreham Wood v Heybridge, Bromley v Oxford C; Carshalton v Dulwich; Dag & Red v Yeading; Grays v Chertsey Tn, Harrow Bor v Sutton Utd; Hitchin v Hendon; Kingstonian v St Albans; Staines v Bishop's Stortford; Yeovil v Purfleet. **First Division:** Basingstoke Tn v Abingdon Tn, Berkhamsted Tn v Aldershot Tn, Canvey Island v Chesham Utd; Croydon v Hampton, Maidenhead Utd v Walton & Hersham; Marlow v Billericay Tn; Molesey v Bognor Regis Tn, Thame Utd v Leyton Pennant; Tooting & Mitcham Utd v Whyteleafe, Wokingham Tn v Uxbridge; Worthing v Barton Rvrs. **Second Division:** Banstead Ath v Leatherhead; Barking v Cheshunt; Bedford Tn v Egham Tn; Bracknell Tn v Tilbury, Chalfont St Peter v Hungerford Tn, Collier Row & Romford v Witham Tn; Dorking v Leighton Tn; Met Police v Horsham, Wembley v Ware; Windsor & Eton v Hemel Hempstead; Wivenhoe Tn v Edgware Tn. **Third Division:** Camberley Tn v Northwood, E Thurrock Utd v Kingsbury Tn, Flackwell Hth v Braintree Tn; Hertford Tn v Clapton; Lewes v Southall, Tring Tn v Harlow Tn, Wealdstone v Epsom & E, Wingate & F v Hornchurch.

NATIONWIDE LEAGUE

First Division

Bradford C v Birmingham
Charlton v Portsmouth (a-t)
C Palace v Barnsley
Grimsby v Reading
Huddersfield v West Brom
Man C v QPR
Oldham v Bolton
Oxford Utd v Swindon (a-t)
Tranmere v Sheff Utd
Wolverhampton v Southend

Tomorrow

Stoke v Port Vale (2.10)

UNIBOND LEAGUE: Premier Division: Barrow v Spennymoor; Bishop Auckland v Knowsley; Blyth Spartans v Marine; Boston Utd v Bamber Bridge; Buxton v Emley; Chorley v Colwyn Bay; Lancaster v Guiseley; Leek Tn v Witton Alb; Runcorn v Accrington Stanley; Winsford Utd v Frickley. **First Division:** Alfreton Tn v Lincoln Utd; Bradford PA v Flixton; Congleton Tn v Radcliffe Bor; Droylsden v Matlock Tn; Farsley Celtic v Ashton Utd; Gretna v Eastwood Tn; Leigh v Gt Harwood Tn; Netherfield v Curzon Ashton; Warrington Tn v Stocksbridge PS; Worksop Tn v Workington.

N-W COUNTIES LEAGUE: First Division: Chadderton v Blackpool Rvrs; Holker OB v Glossop NE; Kidsgrove Ath v Burscough; Maine Road v Bootle; Mossley v Atherton Collieries, Nantwich Tn v Rossendale Utd; Penrith v Trafford; St Helens Tn v Clitheroe; Vauxhall GM v Darwen.

FEDERATION BREWERY NORTHERN LEAGUE: First Division: Bedlington Terriers v Whitby Tn; Consett v Crook Tn; Durham C v Tow Law Tn; Easington v Guisborough Tn, RTM Newcastle v Whickham; Shildon v Morpeth Tn.

NORTHERN COUNTIES EAST LEAGUE: Premier Division: Armthorpe Well v Thackley; Arnold Tn v Glasshoughton Welf; Ashfield Utd v Pickering Tn; Belper Tn v Ossett Alb; Brigg Tn v N Ferriby Utd; Denaby Utd v Maltby MW; Hallam v Liversedge; Ossett Tn v Hatfield Main; Pontefract Cols v Hucknall Tn; Selby Tn v Sheffield.

SCREWFIX DIRECT LEAGUE: Premier Division: Bideford Tn v Paulton Rvrs; Bridgwater Tn v Chippenham Tn; Brislington v Elmore; Chard Tn v Bristol MF; Mangotsfield Utd v Torrington; Taunton Tn v Calne Tn; Tiverton Tn v Odd Down Ath.

Second Division

Brentford v Crewe
Burnley v Rotherham
Bury v Peterborough
Chesterfield v Millwall
Gillingham v Blackpool
Luton v Shrewsbury
Plymouth v Walsall
Preston v Stockport
Wrexham v Watford
Wycombe v Bournemouth
York v Bristol C

Tomorrow

Bristol Rvrs v Notts Co

Third Division

Barnet v Cardiff
Cambridge Utd v Brighton
Chester v Scarborough
Darlington v Hartlepool
Doncaster v Fulham
Hereford v Torquay
Hull v L Orient
Lincoln v Scunthorpe
Northampton v Exeter
Swansea v Mansfield

DR MARTENS LEAGUE: Premier Division: Ashford Tn v Cheltenham; Burton Alb v Hastings; Chelmsford v Atherstone; Dorchester v Worcester C; Gloucester C v Gravesend & N; Halesowen v Sudbury Tn; Kings Lynn v Crawley Tn; Newport AFC v Gresley Rvrs; Nuneaton v Cambridge C; Salisbury v Baldock Tn; Sittingbourne v Merthyr. **Tomorrow:** Crawley Tn v Nuneaton. **Midland Division:** Hinckley Tn v Sutton C'fld Tn; Ilkeston Tn v Redditch Utd; Moor Grn v Evesham Utd; Paget Rngrs v Corby Tn; R C Warwick v Bedworth Utd; Rothwell Tn v Stafford Rngrs; Shepshed Dyn v Raunds Tn; Stourbridge v Solihull Bor; Tamworth v Dudley Tn; VS Rugby v Grantham Tn. **Southern Division:** Bashley v Weston-S-Mare; Buckingham Tn v Newport (IoW); Clevedon Tn v Fareham Tn; Erith & B v Weymouth; Fisher Ath Ldn v Cirencester Tn; Forest Grn v Dartford; Margate v Cinderford Tn; Tonbridge A v Havant Tn; Trowbridge Tn v Fleet Tn; Witney Tn v St Leonards; Yate Tn v Waterlooville. **Tomorrow:** St Leonards v Buckingham Tn.

FAI NATIONAL LEAGUE: Premier: Derry C v St Patricks Ath (7.30). **Tomorrow:** Bohemians v Sligo Rvrs (3.15); Bray Wndrs v Finn Harps (3.15); Dundalk v Cork C; HF Everton v Shelbourne (3.15).

BELL'S SCOTTISH LEAGUE

Premier Division

Hearts v Dunfermline
Kilmarnock v Hibernian
Motherwell v Dundee Utd

Tomorrow

Celtic v Aberdeen

SCOTTISH LEAGUE

First Division

Clydebank v Falkirk
Dundee v St Mirren
Gr Morton v Airdrie
St Johnstone v East Fife
Stirling v Partick

Second Division

Berwick v Hamilton
Clyde v Ayr
Livingston v Dumbarton
Stenhousemuir v Queen of South
Stranraer v Brechin

Third Division

Albion v Arbroath
Cowdenbeath v Alloa
East Stirling v Inverness CT
Montrose v Queen's Park
Ross County v Forfar

S-E COUNTIES LEAGUE (11.0): **First Division:** Arsenal v Leyton Orient; Cambridge Utd v Southend Utd; Fulham v Charlton Ath; Gillingham v Norwich C; Portsmouth v Millwall; QPR v West Ham; Watford v Tottenham. **Second Division:** Barnet v Bournemouth; Crystal Palace v Southampton; Luton Tn v Colchester Utd; Oxford Utd v Bristol Rvrs; Swindon v Bristol C; Wimbledon v Brentford; Wycombe v Brighton. **Postponed:** C Palace v Southampton (now Monday, April 21, 11.0).

LEAGUE OF WALES: Caernarfon Tn v Caersws (2.30); Connah's Quay v Porthmadog; Conwy v Briton Ferry; Holywell v Aberystwyth; Llansantffraid v Rhyl; Newtown v Carmarthen Tn; Ton Pentre v Ebbw Vale (2.30); Welshpool v Cwmbran. **Tomorrow:** Barry Tn v Cemaes Bay; Inter Cable-Tel v Bangor C.

IRISH LEAGUE: Premier Division: Ards v Cliftonville; Crusaders v Coleraine; Glenavon v Portadown; Linfield v Glentoran. **First Division:** Ballymena v Omagh Tn; Carrick v Ballyclare; Larne v Distillery; Newry v Bangor.

Tomorrow

FA WOMEN'S PREMIER LEAGUE: National Division: Arsenal v Everton (2.0); Liverpool FC v Wembley (12.0). **Postponed:** Doncaster v Tranmere Rvrs.

Rugby Union

CIS COUNTY CHAMPIONSHIP: Final: Cumbria v Somerset (Twickenham).
U-21: Final: Dorset & Wilts v Yorkshire (12.3, Twickenham).

COURAGE CLUBS CHAMPIONSHIP: National League One: Bath v Orrell; Bristol v London Irish; Gloucester v Harlequins; Leicester v Saracens (2.15); West Hartlepool v Northampton. **Tomorrow:** Wasps v Sale (Loftus Rd). **National League Two:** Bedford v Ldn Scottish; Blackheath v Waterloo; Coventry v Moseley; Nottingham v Rugby; Richmond v Wakefield; Rotherham v Newcastle. **National League Three:** Clifton v Ldn Welsh; Exeter v Liverpool St Helens; Harrogate v Havant; Lydney v Morley; Reading v Rosslyn Pk; Walsall v Redruth; Wharfedale v Otley. **Tomorrow:** Leeds v Fylde. **National League Four, North:** Aspatria v Kendal; Hereford v Birmingham/Solihull; Nuneaton v Manchester; Sandal v Preston G; Sheffield v Worcester; Stourbridge v Stoke-on-Trent; Winnington Pk v Lichfield. **South:** Askeans v Newbury; Camberley v High Wycombe; Charlton Pk v Plymouth; Cheltenham v Met Police; N Walsham v Barking; Tabard v Berry Hill; Weston-S-Mare v Henley.

WELSH NATIONAL LEAGUE: First Division (2.30): Bridgend v Caerphilly; Cardiff v Dunvant; Ebbw Vale v Pontypridd; Neath v Newport; Newbridge v Swansea; Treorchy v Llanelli. **Second Division** (2.30): Abertillery v Aberavon; Bonymaen v Blackwood; Cross Keys v Ystradgynlais; Llandovery v Abercynon; Pontypool v Maesteg; UWIC (Cardiff Inst) v S Wales Police.

Tomorrow

SRU TENNENTS 1556 CUP: Quarter-finals (2.0): Boroughmuir v Watsonians; Kirkcaldy v Dundee HSFP; Peebles v Heriots FP; West of Scotland v Melrose.
SRU TENNENTS 1556 BOWL: Quarter-finals: Grangemouth v Ross High; Linlithgow v Biggar; Preston Lodge v Selkirk; Trinity Acads v Hillhead/Jordanhill.
SRU TENNENTS 1556 SHIELD: Quarter-finals: Aberdeen GSFP v Glenrothes; Edinburgh Acads v Currie; GHK v Jed-Forest; St Boswells v Hawick.

Rugby League

NATIONAL CONFERENCE LEAGUE (2.30): **Premier Division:** Lock Lane v Wigan St Patricks; Mayfield v West Hull. **First Division:** East Leeds v Walney Central. **Second Division:** Milford v Normanton; York Acorn v Ovenden.
ACADEMY CHAMPIONSHIP: London v Featherstone; Warrington v Bradford. **First Division:** Keighley v Oldham.
ALLIANCE CHAMPIONSHIP: Hull KR v Salford. **First Division:** Workington v London. **Second Division:** Barrow v Huddersfield; Blackpool v Hemel Hempstead; Rochdale v Carlisle; Whitehaven v Prescot.

Tomorrow

STONES SUPER LEAGUE: Castleford v Halifax (3.30); Sheffield v Leeds (6.35); St Helens v Warrington; Wigan v Oldham. **First Division:** Hull v Huddersfield (3.15); Keighley v Dewsbury; Swinton v Hull KR; Widnes v Wakefield; Workington v Featherstone. **Second Division:** Batley v Hunslet (3.15); Carlisle v Rochdale (6.0); Doncaster v Leigh; Prescot v Bramley; York v Barrow.

Basketball

NATIONAL LEAGUE: Men: First Division play-off, semi-finals: Plymouth v Coventry (2.0). **Tomorrow:** Ware v Oxford (5.0). **Women: First Division play-offs, semi-finals:** Sheffield v Rhondda (6.0); Thames Valley v Crystal Palace (7.30).
NBL JUNIOR WOMEN'S DIVISION: Final four play-offs (Harlow): Ipswich v Nottingham (1.0); Spelthorne v Doncaster (1.0).
NBL CADET MEN'S DIVISION: Final four play-offs (Ware): Nottingham v Ware (7.30); London v Birmingham/Stoke (3.30).

Tomorrow

BUDWEISER LEAGUE: Championship play-offs, third leg: London Towers v Newcastle (6.30); Sheffield v Manchester (6.30, Ponds Forge ISC).

Ice Hockey

Tomorrow

WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS (Poland): **Pool B:** Belarus v Austria (4.0, Katowice); Kazakhstan v Denmark (4.0, Sosnowiec); Netherlands v Poland (8.0, Katowice); Great Britain v Switzerland (8.0, Sosnowiec).

Hockey

COUNTY CHAMPIONSHIP: Preliminary rounds (Today 10.30; Tomorrow 9.30): **A Division: Group 1** (Crosby): Durham, Essex, Lancs, Middx, Northants. **Group 2** (Telford): Cheshire, Kent, Notts, Shropshire, Warwicks. **Group 3** (Cannock): Berks, RAF, Staffs, Sussex, Yorks. **Group 4** (Surbiton): Army, Cambs, Hants, Somerset, Surrey. **B Division: Group 5** (Cleaton Moor): Channel Islands, Cumbria, Norfolk, Northumberland, Worcs. **Group 6** (Melton Mowbray): Derbys, IoM, Leics, Lincs. **Group 7** (RN Portsmouth): Beds, Cornwall, Devon, Herefords, RN. **Group 8** (Ipswich): Glos, Oxon, Suffolk, Wilts.
SCOTTISH LEAGUE: Gordonians v Edin Univ; Inverleith v MIM; Torbrex v Kelburne; Watsonians v Grange; Western v Menzieshill.
WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL TOURNAMENT (Cardiff): Slovakia v Poland (12.0); Wales v Ireland (2.30). **Tomorrow:** Ireland v Slovakia (9.30); Wales v Poland (1.0).
WOMEN'S INTER-LEAGUE TOURNAMENT (Milton Keynes): Poynton v Tulse Hill (10.0); Aldridge v Bury St Edmunds (12.0); Colwall v Poynton (2.0); Tulse Hill v Bury St Edmunds (4.0). **Tomorrow:** Aldridge v Colwall (10.0); Bury St Edmunds v Poynton (12.0); Tulse Hill v Aldridge (2.0).
WOMEN'S SOUTH LEAGUE: Play-offs (Bisham, 8.0): Eastbourne, Fleet, Slough II, Teddington, Woking 1A.

Tomorrow

SCOTSMAN CUP: Semi-finals (Dalgety Bay): Grange v MIM (1.0); Gordonians v Western (2.45).
NORTH CLUBS CHAMPIONSHIP: Concord LC, Sheffield, 10.0).
SCOTTISH WOMEN'S LEAGUE CUP: Quarter-finals: Menzieshill v Heriot-Watt.

Cricket

ASHES TOUR HIGHLIGHTS (Starting dates): **May:** Thurs 15 D of Norfolk's XI (Arundel; 1 day); Thu 22 1st TT One-Day Int (Headingley); Sat 24 2nd TT (The Oval); Sun 25 3rd TT (Lord's); Tues 27 Glouce or Sussex or Surrey (3d); Sat 31 Derbys (3d). **June:** Thur 5 1st TEST (Edgbaston); Sat 14 v Leics (3d); Thu 19 2nd TEST (Lord's); Wed 25 Br Univs (Oxford; 3d); Sat 28 Hants (3d). **July:** Thurs 3 3rd TEST (Old Trafford); Wed 16 Glam (3d); Sat 19 Middx (3d); Thu 24 4th TEST (Headingley). **August:** Fri 1 v Somerset (4d); Thu 7 5th TEST (Trent Br); Sat 16 Kent (3d); Thu 21 6th TEST (The Oval).

Hockey

Ireland and Wales hit 11

WALES defeated Slovakia 11–0 yesterday, the first day of a four-nation women's tournament in Cardiff, while Ireland, not to be outdone, won their opening match against the more experienced Poland by the same score, *writes Pat Rowley.*

Swansea's Emma James scored five goals in open play and Wales were so dominant that Slovakia did not force a corner or have a shot on goal. Lynda Watkin, sister of the Glamorgan cricketer Steve, scored twice from corners and the other goals came from Tracey Evans (2), Kate Morgan and the debutante Heulwen Evans.

Sarah Kelleher scored twice for Ireland, whose other scorers were Jenny Burke with three field goals, Mary Logue (two penalties), Laura Brown, Patricia Conway, Carol Devine and Rachel Kohler.

A missed penalty cost Tulse Hill the chance of taking a 2-1 lead against Colwall in their opening match at the English Women's Inter-League play-offs at Milton Keynes. They went on to lose 3-2.

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Soccer

It's been quite a month for Robbie Fowler, who tells **Michael Walker** how it feels to be hero and villain at the same time

Scally? Not me, says Fowler

FIRST there was the T-shirt, the praise and the Uefa fine, not to mention the interest of Calvin Klein. Next there was that "dive" at Highbury, the penalty and the unexpected plea for clemency. After that came a first international goal, against Mexico, then the scuffle, the punch and the red card at Goodison Park on Wednesday night. This has been some month for Robbie Fowler.

And these are just the headlines. Throw in the facts that he also turned 22 and reached the 30-goal mark for a third consecutive season and it is no surprise that Fowler has been almost as ubiquitous as Tony Blair or John Major in the news these past few weeks.

The early articles were glowing with adulation about Fowler and his T-shirted show of solidarity with the sacked Liverpool dockworkers — the Observer even devoted an editorial to it — and that adulation increased after his Corinthian role in disclaiming a penalty against David Seaman at Arsenal. Gary Lineker told Fowler that there was nothing wrong with being Mr Nice Guy.

But the reviews were more mixed for Fowler's England display and the head-shaking widespread after his brawl with David Unsworth. In football's clichéd world the new saint of Anfield had regressed to the sinning scally some thought he always was.

A month ago Fowler's Liverpool team-mates could easily pick him out because of the halo above his head but that will vanish after he faces Manchester United at Anfield this morning. He is banned for the rest of the season.

All the while Fowler, who has a deep suspicion of the press since he was "stitched up good and proper three years ago", has kept quiet. Not even last Sunday, as he sat in an executive box at Roker Park with David James pulling on a cigarette beside him, would Fowler comment on his 30 goals other than to say, "I'm letting my feet do the talking for me at the moment."

They are eloquent enough for most. But this week he did talk about his fluctuating fortunes. "It's been a strange month," he said with admirable understatement. "But to tell the truth I'd do it all again, except for the sending-off."

He had been sent off twice before — for Liverpool B and the England Under-21s — but both times for dissent, not for violent conduct. Indeed, he felt that he had not been particularly violent on Wednesday. "I was very surprised when I saw the red card because I thought it was handbags at 10 paces.

"It was a late challenge by him [Unsworth] and I sort of 'bit' because he was at me all night. But look at the size of me. I'm not violent, I'm brave ...ish. No, I'm brave. The funny thing is I know him and I've nothing against him personally. We didn't see each other in the players' lounge afterwards, and maybe that's just as well, but in the long run it'll cool down."

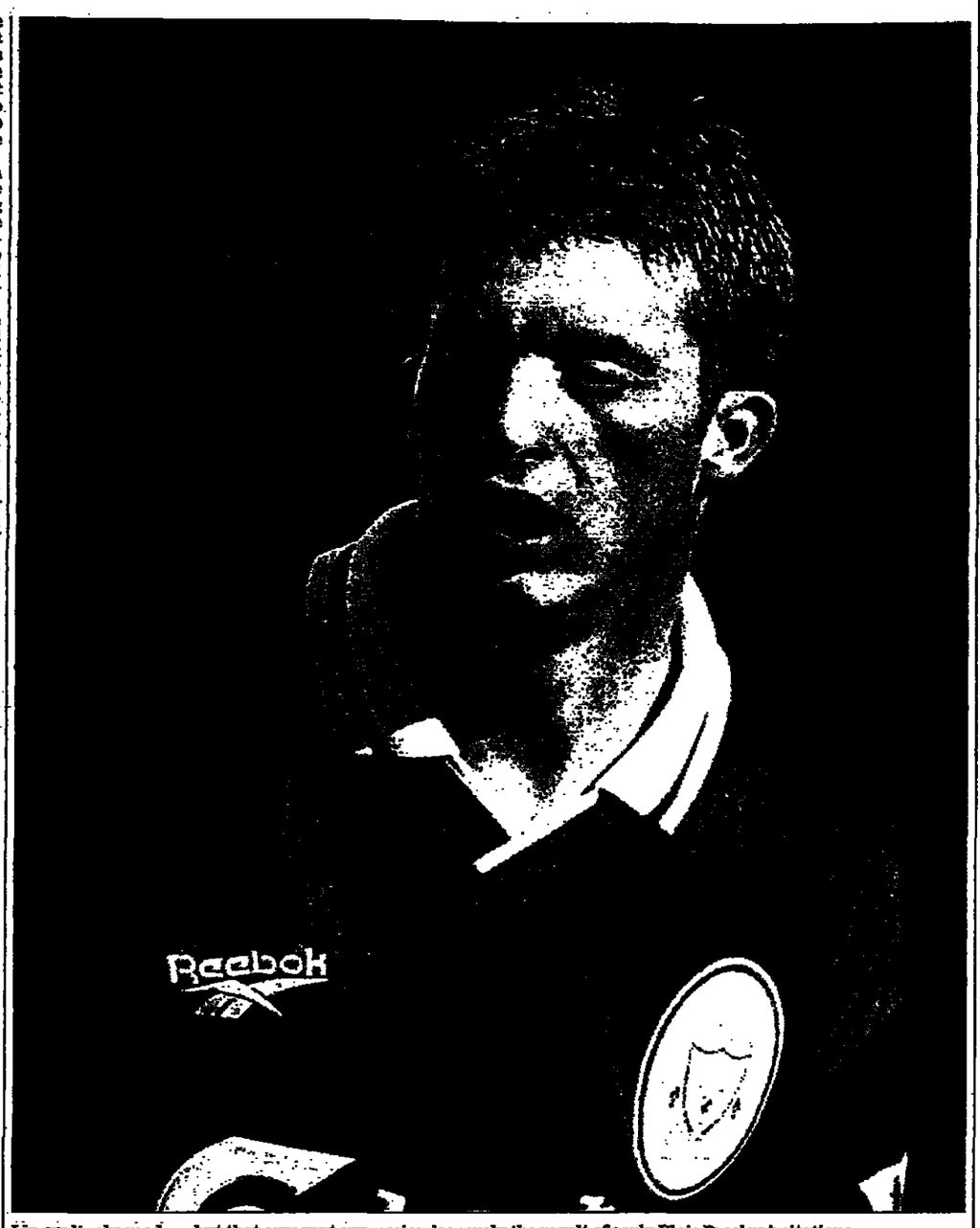
The spotlight on Fowler, however, shows no sign of doing so. Robert Bernard Fowler has loomed large in British football since he announced his arrival in the big team at 18 by scoring all five goals in a League Cup victory over Fulham.

In that 1993–94 season, Graeme Souness's last at Anfield, Fowler scored 18 goals. He followed that with 31 in his first full season and topped that last season with 36 in all competitions. This season he has has already reached the 30-goal landmark again.

With such talent his progress into the England team was inevitable, yet the public perception of Fowler was restricted to newspaper gossip about his Toxteth upbringing, his liaison with a Labour MP's daughter, an invented wrecked hotel room story, an altercation with Neil Ruddock — "he hit me once and that was it" — a busking appearance in Liverpool city centre, and similar images of Fowler as a riotous tearaway.

This, though, was an image that did not please Fowler. On Tuesday, after attending the memorial service for the eighth anniversary of Hillsborough at which Fowler's significance was reflected in the numbers wearing his No.9 shirt, he set about redressing the balance.

"It was difficult at first," he admitted, "because once I first got into the side it really did happen very quickly. Anything off the pitch I didn't want to know about; I just wanted to play football. But Liverpool were going through a bad time and I got thrown in. All eyes were on me. I never really spoke then but, when I did, I used to get labelled in the press as a scally or a little ragamuffin and, while I might be a lot of things, I've never been a scally."



Lip-curlingly good . . . but that arrogant expression is merely the result of early Elvis Presley imitations

Having witnessed him sign the obligatory autograph while filling the window-cleaner's bucket at the south Liverpool home to which he has moved his family from Toxteth and seen him deal with the demands of punters and minor Brookside celebrities in a Liverpool night-club, it is easy to believe him when he says: "I'm quite shy sometimes; I don't think of myself as a big star. I'm just normal and I've still got the same mates." Some see an arrogant snarl on Fowler's face during matches but he would argue that his appearance is merely a case of curled Elvis lip — he fancies himself as a karaoke Presley.

Success, celebrity and riches at such a young age bring their own problems but Fowler appears to have coped better than many. His childhood, he says, "was full of the usual things — playing football, building dens, throwing the odd stone". No serious trouble came his way.

Indeed the biggest fuss surrounding Fowler came with his dockers T-shirt message. Both he and his great friend Steve McManaman had made financial contributions to Liverpool's laid-off dockworkers before the incident, but Fowler was unprepared for the response when, after scoring with clinical ease against Bergen, he pulled up his shirt to reveal the T-shirt.

"Macca had a T-shirt and handed me one and, when I scored, I lifted my jersey. I thought it would be just a simple statement of support for the dockers. I didn't realise it would cause so much furore. But I'm not embarrassed about it [the fine has yet to be paid]. There are footballers who have come out and supported the Conservative party, and is that all right?"

Four days later Fowler hurdled the reckless challenge of Seaman and tried to prevent the Arsenal keeper being booked or sent off. The crescendo of acclaim made Fowler feel like doing an Emerson.

"I thought it would die down after that, but it dragged on for weeks. Then there was a lot of hype about me before the England game. I can't remember the last time I was nervous but I was nervous that night, and it showed. I didn't play particularly well but I scored, I did my job."

Not for much longer, though. Today's 90 minutes with Manchester United will be his last in the Premiership this season. Having scored four goals against them in their two league games last year Fowler was hoping he had become United's "bogyman" and he still feels Liverpool would make worthy champions.

"On our day I don't think anyone can live with us. It's frustrating because when I was growing up I was a big Everton fan and I couldn't stand Man U. They have won everything over the past four to five years and the people and the players of Liverpool don't like that. When you do beat them a real buzz goes around the place."

How Liverpool need their bogy-man to get them buzzing again this morning. He might do it, too. After all, there is no doubt that Robbie Fowler is the man of the moment.

No court action over red card

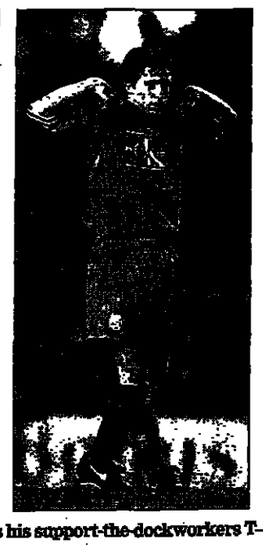
LIVERPOOL will not be disputing Robbie Fowler's three-match suspension through the courts.

Fowler, who was sent off for violent conduct along with Everton's David Unsworth during the 1–1 draw at Goodison Park on Wednesday, will therefore play his last league game of the season at Anfield today.

Wednesday's referee Stephen Lodge, whose report was received by the Football Association yesterday, issued red cards to both players with eight minutes of the match remaining.

Liverpool, however, contacted the FA yesterday morning to deny a report that they were considering High Court action over the suspension of the England striker.

"The club have absolutely no intention of pursuing this matter through the courts," said a spokesman. "That would be contrary to Uefa guidelines and Liverpool would never try and bend the rules."



Headline moments . . . Fowler hurdles Seaman before defending him at Highbury, left, shows his support-the-dockworkers T-shirt at Anfield and tangles with Unsworth at Goodison Park

Liverpool go in search of morning glory

Ian Ross hears Roy Evans try to take the heat off his players before today's game

MANCHESTER United at home with the title at stake? No big deal, Roy Evans claimed yesterday. The Liverpool manager shrugged as he delivered one of football's least endearing cliches. "People keep telling us that we have crucial games coming up," he said, "but they're all like that now."

Or maybe not. Defeat by Manchester United at Anfield this morning will render Liverpool's three remaining Premiership fixtures somewhat less crucial.

Evans can clutch a straw with the best of them but even his bulging reservoir of optimism will begin to drain away if Alex Ferguson and his players should head off back down the East Lancs Road today with all the points.

After his side had rather carelessly spilled two points at Everton on Wednesday, Evans insisted that his team would "fight to the bitter end". But then, don't they all?

"This really has been a very strange season and we have as good a chance as anyone now," he said.

"We have had a couple of decent wins over Manchester United recently, although, to be honest, we didn't play at all in last season's FA Cup final. But we are ready for this very big and special occasion and we can still win the title."

Liverpool have won their last two games at Anfield against Manchester United 2–0. But more recent form promises them something less than a repeat performance: they lost 1–0 at Old Trafford five months ago and subsequently squandered a 10-point lead they held over United on December 17.

Evans also believes that Arsenal's challenge cannot, and should not, be discounted. "They have the easiest run-in," he pointed out. "They will be hoping this game ends as a draw."

Liverpool are concerned almost as much by Arsenal as by Manchester United. The fear is that defeat today could so traumatise Evans's men that they could even miss the safety net of second place and thus find themselves not in the Champions League next season but in the Uefa Cup. That could cost the club around £10 million.

Accusations that Liverpool's senior squad is awash with young men more concerned with hairdos, image and modelling assignments than winning trophies do persist.

The biggest of all catwalks awaits this morning and if Evans's lamé army can display their goods without any unfortunate slips, success may yet be snatched from the jaws of possible disaster.

Vialli makes his peace at Chelsea

Martin Thorpe

GIANLUCA VIALLI has confirmed that he will decide his Chelsea future in the summer.

After a season spent mostly on the bench and not being spoken to by his manager Ruud Gullit, the Italian said: "I hope Chelsea are happy with me. If so, I would like to play for the club for the next two seasons of my contract. Otherwise it would be better for me to change. I don't see any reasons to so far, although I don't know what the club thinks."

Vialli, who will make a rare start against Leicester today, added: "What matters is your relationship with the manager, with other players and with the fans. I think that my relationship with the fans and the players is fantastic. With the manager, we've had some problems, but now we have to forget them until after the FA Cup final.

"I'm the sort of player who needs to play for 90 minutes, not 20, but that will wait until the summer. Then we'll have a chat and decide what is best for me and for Chelsea."

He admitted that a meeting called by Gullit had "sorted out" the problems between them and he even added: "Becoming a substitute at 32 has actually made me stronger, helped me to think about things, so I'm glad I've gone through it."

Gullit has confirmed his interest in Anderlecht's Nigerian full-back Celestine Babayara but denied a deal has already been signed.

The Premier League yesterday confirmed that it had received a writ for restraint of trade from Vinnie Jones. The Wimbledon skipper is suing the League and the Dons to be allowed a free move to another English club when his contract runs out this summer.

Jones is arguing that the Bosman ruling, which means out-of-contract players can move on free transfers across European Union boundaries, should also apply to domestic transfers.

Premier League rules explicitly support the present domestic transfer system and its spokesman, Mike Lee, said: "The writ is in the hands of our lawyers."

Brighton's long-term survival appears to have been assured after the FA called a news conference for Tuesday to announce details of a takeover agreement.

The FA has been working all season to bring together the current owner, Bill Archer, and would-be saviour Dick Knight.

The Newcastle manager Kenny Dalglish watched the Danish midfielder Jon Dahl Tomasson play for the Dutch club Heerenveen on Thursday.

Uefa has confirmed that if Manchester United win the European Cup and finish third in the league, England would have three teams in the competition next season.

Hearts float to raise £5 million

Ian King

HEARTS are to raise £5 million in a stock-market flotation that will value the club at more than £14 million and make them Scotland's second quoted football club.

The Hearts chairman Leslie Dean will see his stake in the club valued at £2.9 million, the chief executive Christopher Robinson's £3.5 million.

The Edinburgh-based club are to float on the City's main index at the Stock Exchange, whereas Celtic are currently listed on the less restrictive Alternative Investment Market.

Announcing details of the flotation yesterday, Dean said most of the cash raised would go towards a new stand at Tynecastle and new undersoil heating. Hearts will also use it to reduce borrowings; no new money will be used to buy players.

Dean said: "This flotation will allow us to take full advantage of football-related and other opportunities and will assist in the continued development of Tynecastle, which by next season will be one of the most modern stadia in Scotland."

● Sunderland saw almost £2 million wiped off their market value as the shares crashed 25p to 492½p amid fears of possible relegation.

Performance of the week: Steve Claridge (Leicester City), whose goal won his team the Coca-Cola Cup on Wednesday amid renewed fanfares for an uncommon footballer.

A N Other

THE best-remembered moment of this amiable, Wilmslow-born pivot's playing career came when one of his occasional goals helped settle a final argument at the third time of asking. He was guarding a house at the time, having earlier crossed the moors before donning a southern boater. Sainthood was to follow, but this tale had a fishy ending.

Last week: Billy McGarry (Port Vale, Huddersfield, Bournemouth).

Lama cannabis test confirmed

BERNARD LAMA, Paris St-Germain's French international goalkeeper, was confirmed yesterday as having tested positive for cannabis. The 34-year-old now faces suspension at a critical stage in his career, a year before the World Cup finals.

The result of a second urine sample has confirmed a positive test in February and Lama, France's first-choice during the European Championship, will appear before the French federation's doping commission within the next 10 days.

Scottish preview

Celtic need tonic before facing Falkirk

Patrick Glenn

CELTIC could plan to beat Aberdeen around 10–0 tomorrow in order to keep the pressure on Rangers, who are 12 points ahead and 17 goals to the good with four Premier Division matches to play.

More probably the Parkhead side will concentrate on recovering form in time for Wednesday's Scottish Cup semi-final replay against Falkirk. Without a win in five matches since they beat Rangers at the quarter-finals, Celtic are in need of a restorative.

During that run, with only two points taken from four league matches, the championship has been all but conceded, and even their expected breeze into the cup final past First Division opposition did not materialise when they were held 1–1 by Falkirk last Saturday.

Aberdeen have also been suffering. Roy Aitken's men have drawn 13 of their 33 league games, making them Scotland's draw specialists by a distance; no other side has reached double figures.

Celtic may be inspired by the return to midfield of their captain Paul McStay. He strained a groin two weeks ago against Raith and has been back in training only three days. The decision on his availability will be made with the cup replay in mind.

Alan Stubbs has recovered from the head injury he sustained against Falkirk although Malky Mackay, now free of suspension, may be preferred in central defence. The midfielder Peter Grant completes a three-match suspension.

The only outstanding issue in the Premier Division is the relegation play-off place. With Motherwell, Hibernian and Kilmarnock in contention, it has produced an intriguing mini-league in its own right.

Kilmarnock and Hibernian meet today at Rugby Park, while Motherwell, second from bottom, are at home to Dundee United. It is a curious probability that these clubs will attract bigger crowds than they would if they were chasing a place in Europe.

● Celtic and Rangers are expected to face Scottish FA fines next month following a series of after-match incidents in the Old Firm derby at Celtic Park on March 16.

The secretaries of the two clubs, Celtic's Dominic Keane and Rangers' Campbell Ogilvie, have been summoned to appear before the next disciplinary committee meeting on May 7 or May 8.

Prince of the Crucible
Stephen Hendry back on the stage
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A Lion in the shadows
Ben Clarke and life on the sidelines
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The Guardian sport

SOCCER: THE PREMIERSHIP SHOWDOWN

Reds and Red Devils ready to attack

David Lacey looks for fault lines in Manchester United's impressive facade

MANCHESTER United will travel to Anfield this morning in the mood to impose a guillotine motion on the championship. Alex Ferguson is confident that his players can attack Liverpool on their own ground and gain the three points that would go a long way towards securing Old Trafford's fourth title in five seasons.

If United beat Liverpool — and they have won at Anfield only once in their last six visits — fixture congestion should become less of a problem. United would be five points ahead of Liverpool with a match in hand and seven points away from their 11th title.

A draw would be a worse result for Anfield than Highbury. Certainly Ferguson is counting both on Liverpool going for a win and his own team showing superior temperament for the occasion.

"In the past Liverpool have gone into games with us very relaxed and won them," the United manager reflected yesterday. "But tomorrow they have to do the business.

"I've no idea about the make-up of their players but I know the make-up of my own. I trust them to get on with the job. There have been some excellent performances this season and always on occasions when it's really mattered — and it matters tomorrow."

It is seven years since Liverpool took their last league title and Ferguson is convinced that United's more recent experience of winning championships will be an advantage on the run-in. "It's something you have to go through," he said. "A lot of good players have left this club without a medal. It can become an albatross. It can become too much for some players."

If, however, Ferguson is counting on Roy Evans's players losing their nerve he may be disappointed. In fact one of Liverpool's problems this season, especially in home matches, has been an absence of that degree of nervous tension which successful teams often need.

Motivation ought not to be a problem for Liverpool. Fowler, suspended for the rest of the Premiership programme after being sent off at Everton on Wednesday for fighting, will surely want to go out with a flourish while Collymore, due to return after injury, must want to show Anfield that he can step into the breach.

Yesterday, as usual, the United team remained locked in the vault of Ferguson's innermost thoughts. Much will depend on the fitness of his four recent casualties: Schmeichel, Irwin, May and Giggs. Schmeichel's massive presence in goal would be a considerable boost, "but he'll only play if he's fit," Ferguson stressed. "There'll be no risks taken."

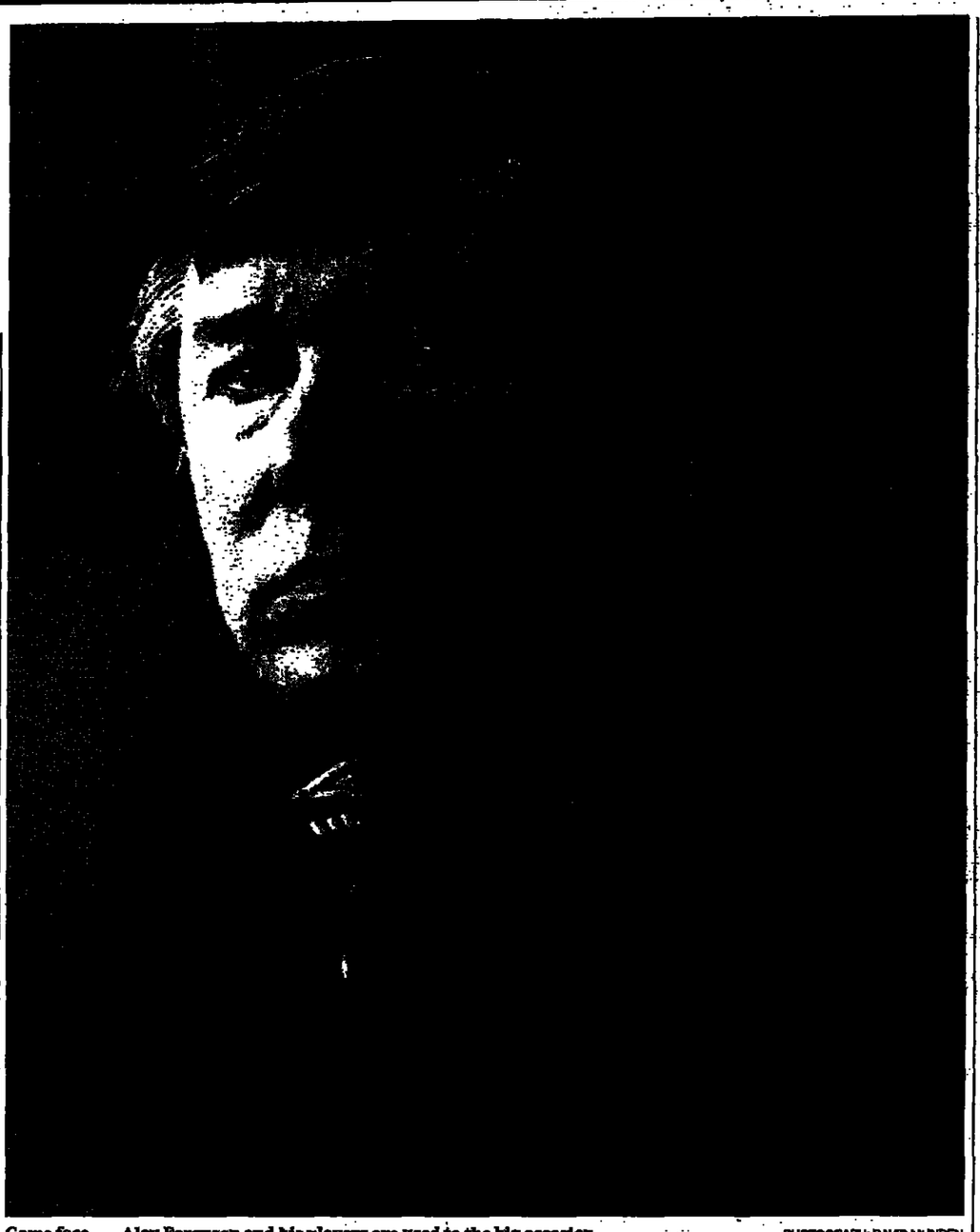
After last Saturday's performance at Blackburn, when a United side forced to make several changes played impressively and won 3–2, their manager may well be tempted to leave Solskjaer and Cole up front with Cantona in close support. Certainly he will want Beckham looking fresher than he did when United lost the away leg of their European Cup semi-final 1–0 to Borussia Dortmund.

Much today will depend on how well Keane and Butt can break up Liverpool's precise passing patterns in order to get at their back three.

Yet should McAteer be fit, and McManaman and Fowler strike form, United could find themselves not only denied the victory that would lift spirits sky-high for the European Cup on Wednesday but dragged back into the muck and nettles of a three-cornered Premiership contest.

If that happens, with Keane suspended for the return game against Dortmund, United's spring may be a little late after all.

Exclusive: Robbie Fowler speaks page 23



Game face . . . Alex Ferguson and his players are used to the big occasion PHOTOGRAPH: DAVID MUNDEN

United push on fixture protest

Martin Thorpe

THIS morning's game has been given added spice by Manchester United's decision to go to arbitration to have the season extended.

Liverpool are set against the idea but the champions are determined to take the season beyond May 11 to ease fixture congestion that at present has them down to play four games in the last nine days.

After the Premier League turned down United's request, the club appealed to the FA. But yesterday Lancaster Gate said the matter was outside its jurisdiction.

United disagree and have invoked FA rules under which a panel of three arbitrators will decide if the FA does have the power to adjudicate. This will take place next week.

"We think this matter is that important," said Maurice Watkins, a United director and solicitor. "Not just for us — it could happen to anyone in the future. We think the FA have the power to adjudicate and they have agreed to arbitration."

If United are again rebuffed, by the arbitrators or ultimately by the FA, they say they will review their options. This could include a form of legal action.

The panel will come from an FA list of arbitrators. United will pick one, the FA another and these two will choose a third, who will be legally qualified.

Watkins said United first want to win the right to extend the season before deciding which of their games to switch.

David Lacey

When putting players in the picture is an art in itself

SINCE being sent off for fighting hardly amounts to martyrdom, it must be assumed that the canonisation of Robbie Fowler has been put on hold. He would not have won many admirers at Goodison on Wednesday by claiming that there had been no contact with the opponent in question. Not to worry. By the time Fowler fell out with Everton's David Unsworth football had already discovered a divine alternative.

One's initial reaction on seeing Eric Cantona depicted, in an oil covering 80 square feet, as Christ arising from the tomb was that both painter and purchaser must be several shades short of a full palette. Then again the artist was joking and presumably Cantona bought the picture for the same reason Marilyn Monroe snapped up as many of those nude photos of herself as she could.

The clergymen who attacked the Cantona painting surely missed the point, which was that the work was not really trying to make a point at all. How could it when the mighty Eric presented a figure more reminiscent of Frankie Howerd in Up Pompeii?

But do not titter. Oh titter ye not. Portraying famous football people in biblical scenes could set a trend. Joe Kinnear might feature in the miracle of the loaves and the fishes, Kenny Dalglish could deliver the sermon on the mount and George Graham cleanse the temple. And who better than Paul Gascoigne to turn water into wine?

The most intriguing feature of Michael Browne's The Art of the Game was not so much his image of Cantona, based on Piero della Francesca's Resurrection of Christ, as his inclusion, in the background, of Andrea Mantegna's Julius Caesar on his Triumphal Chariot. Except that in this case Caesar is Alex Ferguson, the first consul of Manchester United.

Historically the juxtapositioning of the two characters is inaccurate, Julius Caesar having died in 44 BC. But Browne could hardly have portrayed Ferguson as the ruler of Rome at the time of the resurrection since Tiberius eventually went mad. And Julius did do well in Europe, particularly when winning on away Gauls.

Yet, compared to old Jules, Fergie has the edge in getting past March 15 without a scratch. Since the security of a manager is roughly on a par with the emperors Nero and Caligula, this is no small feat.

The current season presents a scenario worth considering as football's answer to I Claudius. Arsenal sacked Bruce Rioch as the first ball was kicked, Howard Wilkinson left Leeds United while the leaves were still green, Ray Harford parted company with Blackburn Rovers before the clocks went back, Frank Clark was replaced by a consular horse at Nottingham Forest and Kevin Keegan took the Brutus way out at Newcastle.

Tomorrow, on BBC2, Alan Hansen, Match of the Day's Virgil, will be talking to a number of modern managers in a documentary, The Sack Race. Tommy Docherty, dismissed by Manchester United after they won the FA Cup because of his love for the club physio's wife, is interviewed, as are two other managers who could be said to have been more seriously involved with affairs of the heart, Graeme Souness and Barry Fry.

Souness, while manager of Liverpool, had a triple heart bypass and during the 1992 FA Cup semi-final with Portsmouth had a doctor at his side on the bench. Fry has had two heart attacks but still went out and bought Peterborough.

THIS season has seen around 50 managerial changes in England and Scotland. Three of them involve one man, Iain Munro, late of Hamilton, St Mirren and Raith.

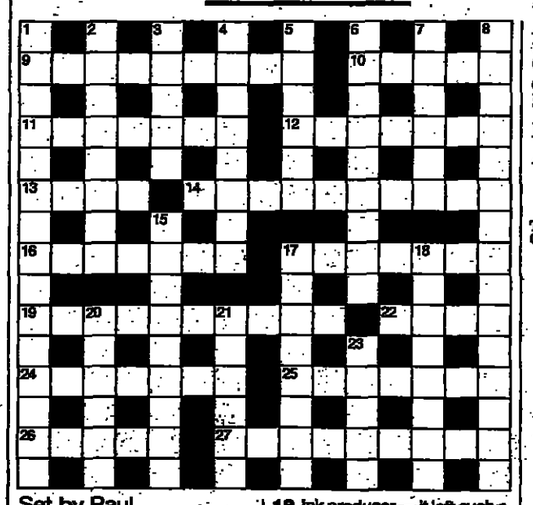
Colin Murphy was dismissed by Notts County four weeks after taking part in the programme. Has Michael Browne ever thought about depicting certain club chairmen in a reproduction of the Last Supper?

The public have only another week to view the resurrected Cantona before he takes it home. But do not despair, supporters of Leeds United are believed to be commissioning another to depict Eric in a role which acknowledges his Frenchness and sums up their feelings towards him. It will be based on the Death of Marat.

The Guardian sport

In Monday's sports section:
Award-winning writers report on the race for the Premiership and the first round of the world snooker championship; plus profiles of four men who can revive English cricket and columns by Harry Pearson and Frank Keating

Guardian COLLINS Prize Crossword No 20,942



Set by Paul

Across

9 Open with a drink, soft but then lay down something stronger (9)
10 A stone circle goes west, the last in Greece (5)
11 The King has little hesitation: "Two pints right away and an orange" (7)
12 Raise rum and lime? Not Paul! Maybe Saul? (7)
13 Though 26 has nothing in it, it's a masterly success (4)
14 Cold ram and some 25 for the giraffe (10)
16 Do Bill and the First Lady accept an informal greeting? (7)
17 Scrap increase in price of drink? (5-2)
19 Ink producer — it left such a mess (10)
22 You have bottle opener and you have wine. Sling out the cheese! (4)
24 Rock at 20 (3-4)
25 Strip at 20 (7)
26 Girl leaves glass at 20 — a revered vessel (5)
27 I'm teetotal. I love upsetting the theme (9)

Down

1 Put a penny on or withdraw in cards at 20 (4,11)
2 Extremely restricted opening at 20 (8)
3 People brazenly looking for business, the last being first at 20 (5)
4 Two terms at 20 and one may get carried away (8)
5 The key is to get the odds before the end of the race (6)
6 I call solver 8 — now it's solver's call at 20 (4,5)
7 Within Europe set about finding a currency (6)
8 Men paid for services rendered, not for unpredictable character (5,10)
15 Beat lazy English soul with fervour (9)
17 After father gets passport there's no need for a stamp (4-4)
18 Man has no true development, till now (8)
20 Legal people with bad breath (3,3)
21 Strengthen the French, being very weak (6)
23 Lucky as a doughnut? (5)

A copy of the Collins English Dictionary will be sent to the first five correct entries drawn. Entries to The Guardian Crossword, P.O. Box 14641, London, EC1R 3JX, or Fax to 0171 278 9115 by first post on Friday. Solution and winners in the Guardian on Monday April 28.

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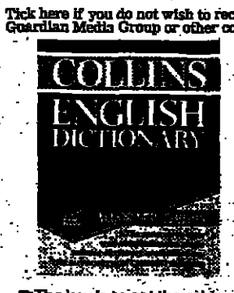

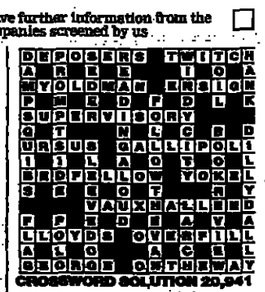

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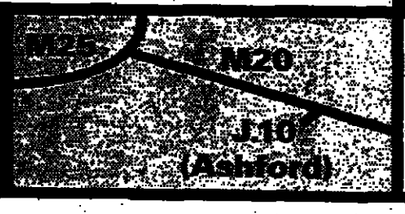

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